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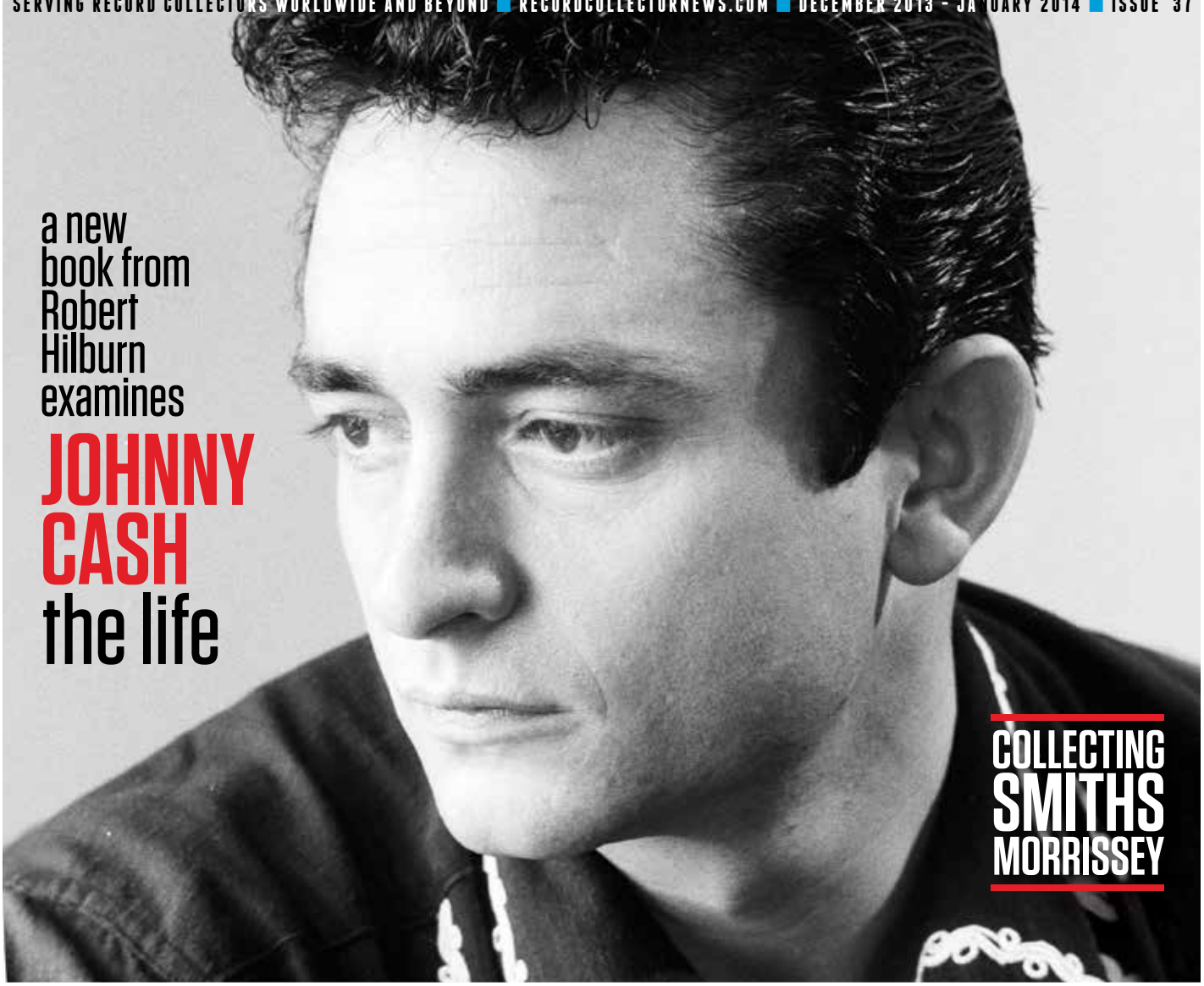

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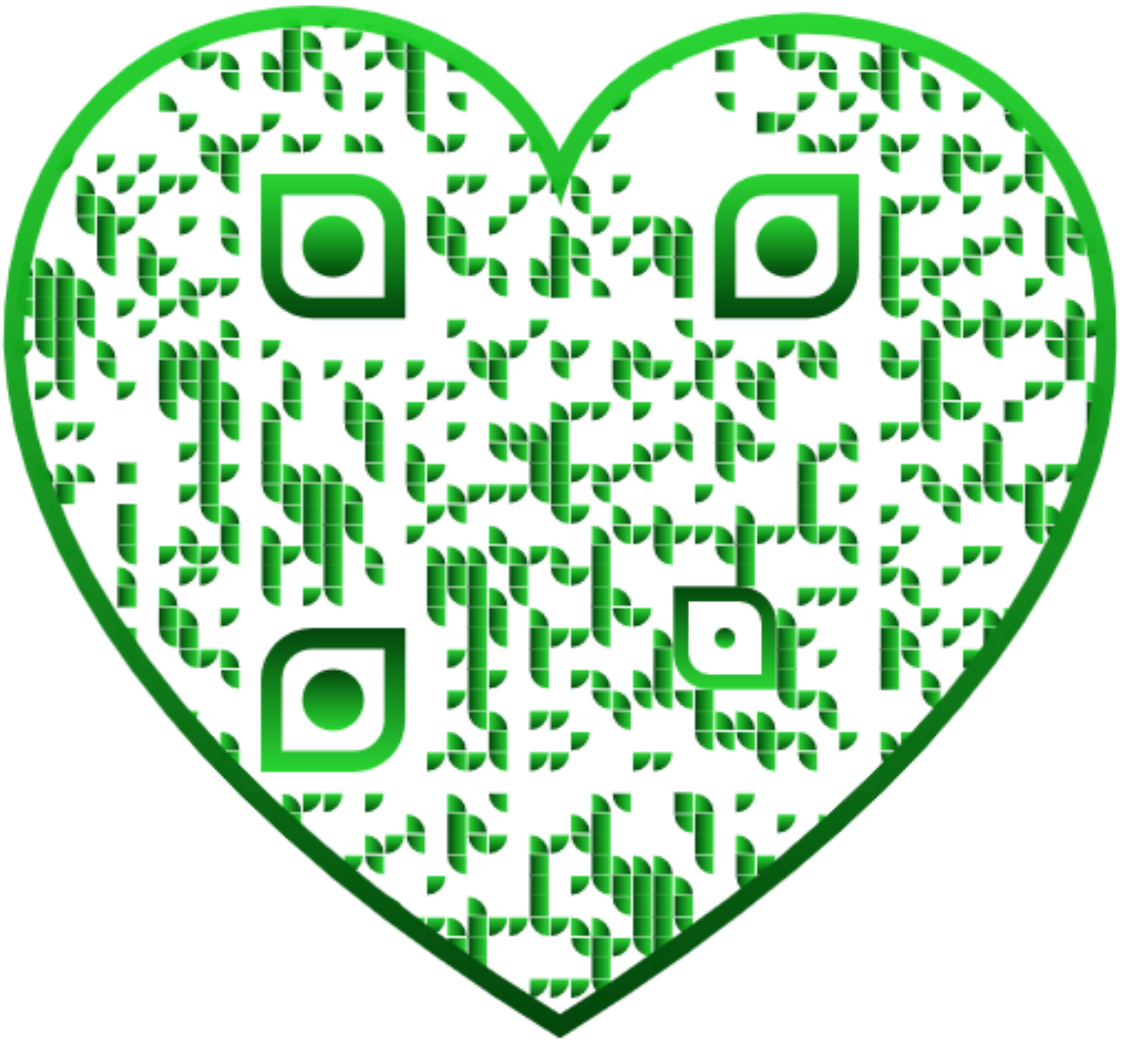

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"I do Lou Reed better than anybody. So I thought I'd get into it."
— Lou Reed–*Live Take No Prisoners* (1978 Arista Records)

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Hooray for Hollywood Record Stores

JIM KAPLAN

The Record Parlor is one of Hollywood, CA's new record purveyors.

BY JIM KAPLAN

DATELINE: HOLLYWOOD

WHEN DID HOLLYWOOD become hipster haven? A dozen years ago I was employed by the *LA Weekly*, its offices at the time were on Sunset Blvd. near Highland Ave. We didn't go out to our cars alone at night. Even lunchtime walks to Two Guys From Italy could be an adventure.

Also, around that time, **Amoeba Records** opened its Hollywood location at Sunset and Cahuenga Blvds. It is the biggest of the three Amoeba stores that include Haight Street in San Francisco and the original Telegraph Ave. location in Berkeley. Amoeba's size, energy and amazingness seemed to scare a bunch of record stores out of existence, but I think most of those stores used Amoeba as an excuse to shut down because they were tired — zombie record stores shooting themselves in the head to put themselves out of their misery.

Thankfully, some stores weren't so shortsighted and Hollywood is home to anywhere from eight to twenty really essential record shops — depending how far east and west you're willing to ramble. Anyone who thinks Amoeba is the only record store worth visiting in Hollywood would be only partly right and missing out on some amazing vinyl.

Hollywood is, and has always been, great for collecting records.

Among the stores that didn't freak out and shut down when Amoeba came to town are **Counterpoint Records** (5911 Franklin Ave.), **As The Record Turns** (6727-3/8 Hollywood Blvd.) and **The Record Collector** (7809 Melrose Ave.) All three of these stores have been around for many years and are some of the deepest stores in L.A. with The Record Collector alone having well over 100,000 records on site. (None of which are priced, of course.)

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Headline Records (7706 Melrose Ave.) is the premier punk rock store in L.A. **Ahead Stereo** (7428 Beverly Blvd.) has awesome stereo equipment — from entry level to way up there. And they always have a few boxes of used records that are worth digging through. And I usually stop at Milk down the street and get an ice cream sandwich. Truth.

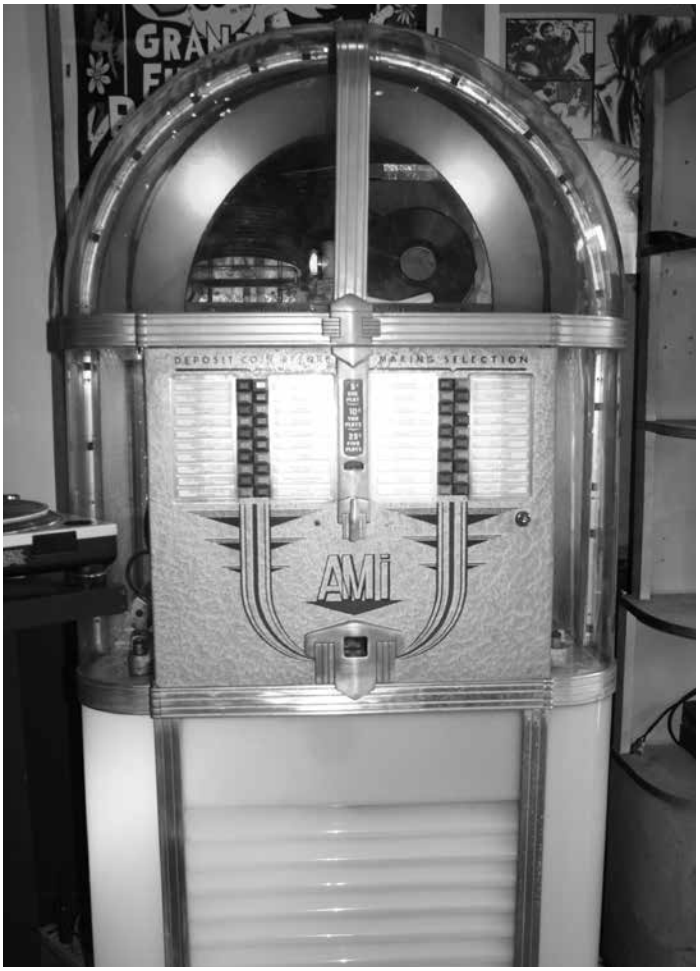
Street Sounds and **Melrose Music** (7704 and 7301 Melrose Ave.) are worth digging through. The stock seems to vary so you just have to stop by if you are in the area.

But the newest and most interesting record store to open up in L.A. has to be **The Record Parlour.** Opened by Chris Honetschlaeger and Chadwick Hemus, the Record Parlour raises Hollywood's cool factor even further by combining great records, great vintage equipment and a great location in the heart of Hollywood.

Chris' background is in gear and Record Parlour has some amazing gear alongside the records. We're talking gorgeous, vintage, fully functional, fully stocked, fully refurbished, fully guaranteed vintage jukeboxes next to cool vintage '70s turntables and speakers make this the place to get your gear on too. Seriously.

I fell in love with a beautiful sounding 78 jukebox they had playing last time I was there. Amazing how good those 78s can sound. Chris has a 10,000 sq. ft. warehouse and workshop where the crew expertly refurbish and repair vintage equipment. So don't forget to talk to these guys about repairs as well.

I overheard them talking about making new leather bellows or something for some kind of antique equipment as if it was fun for them. Personally, the only tool I am really safety rated to use is a butter knife. So it's good to have people like this around. Know what I mean? Also, Chris probably has more access to vintage equipment than any one I've seen in L.A., making this the kind of place to stop by once a week or so, just to check out what's new.



The Record Parlor sells fully refurbished, vintage jukeboxes, turntables, speakers and other equipment — which they also fix — as well as a great selection of collectible vinyl.

Chad's expertise is in vinyl. He grew up in a family full of vinyl and he never left. At some point in life he wound up working at Amoeba Music in San Francisco and eventually came down to Los Angeles to help setup the Hollywood Amoeba store.

I met Chad when he was running the Amoeba presence at So Cal record swaps. I remember the first time he was at Pasadena City College. Lots of dealers were pissed. They felt they didn't need the competition. I went over to check out the bins and saw all kinds of stuff I wanted. It was like a mini "best of Amoeba".

Within hours, enough dealers had gone through Amoeba's bins to realize there was something for everyone here. Soon Under Chad's influence, Amoeba's tables at ANY record show were two-deep with early a.m. dealers jockeying for position. Elbows out. Records flying.

Some record stores and dealers price their records a little high, as if they are afraid they won't be able to replace them. The Record Parlour prices their records to sell. Obviously, Chad has the confidence that he's got the stock to replace them.

Hollywood seems to be happening again. The grandeur of the '50s and '60s gave way to the neglect of the '70s, which lasted until just about ten or less years ago. And now we're seeing Hollywood rise up and look pretty again. You know, Hollywood started to turn around about the time that vinyl started getting hot again. Where once there were methadone clinics and Scientologists, there are now trendy bars, clubs, restaurants and record stores. And we're talking seriously good fun food too. (I personally dig Umami Burger.)

And now Hollywood's got Record Parlour. Check it out for sure. You'll see why good records, cool gear and great location make for a completely essential record store. RCN

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PHOTOS BY JIM KAPLAN

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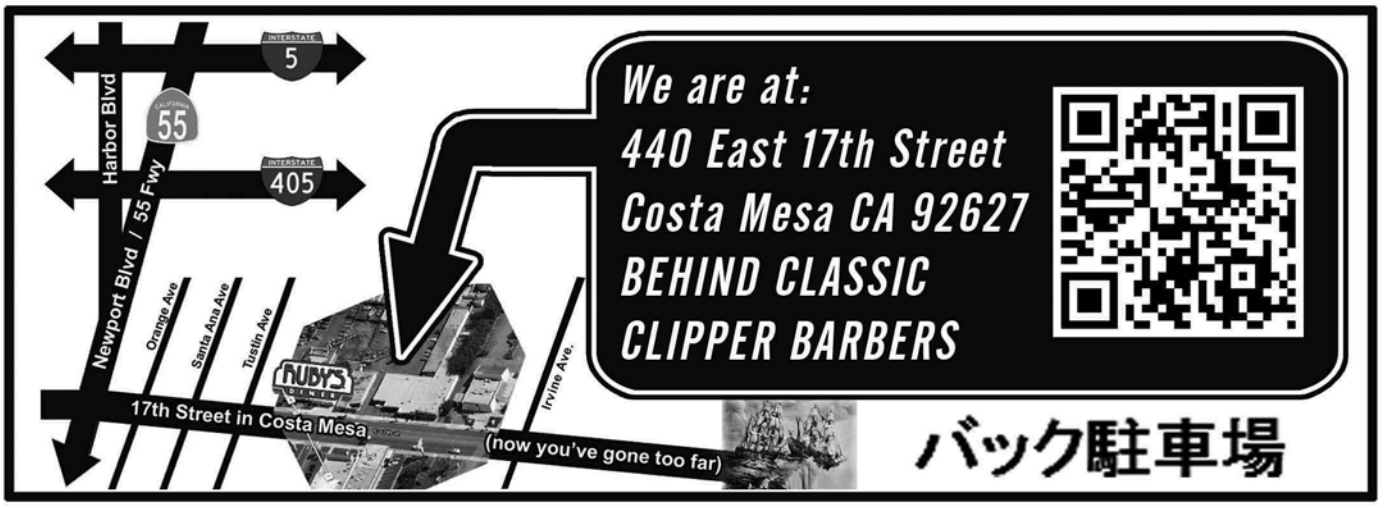

Lou Reed

The Velvet Underground frontman dies at age 71

RICHIE UNTERBERGER

LOU REED'S DEATH FROM liver disease on October 27 was a shock to those of us who figured he'd be around forever, or at least that if anyone could come out fighting for a good decade or more after a liver transplant, it would be him. Sure, it was cause for alarm when that transplant canceled his California shows in April. Yet just a few months later, he seemed back on the beam as if little had happened, traveling to London to help launch his friend Mick Rock's book of Reed photos. An interview with *MOJO* to promote the volume found him only marginally less feisty than usual; when asked whether he'd write a memoir, he shot back, "Why would I? Write about myself? I don't think so. Set what record straight? There's not a record to keep straight. I am what I am, it is what it is, and fuck you."

No, Lou was not the easiest of guys for journalists to interview. He wasn't the nicest of guys either, though friends like producer Tony Visconti have spoken of a man who, in private, could be much warmer and humbler than his public persona. But, in the best of his music, he was the most honest of rock legends. Whether Reed sang (or sang-spoke, in his inimitable vocal style) of joy, despondency, euphoria, depression or rock and roll, it was as if the truth traveled unfiltered from his brain to his vocal chords. As a journalist of human emotion, his integrity was unmatched.

For me, and probably many readers, my introduction to Lou Reed came through "Walk on the Wild Side," even if few if any of the sixth-graders in my class knew what he was really singing about when it rose to the Top 20 in spring 1973. And probably like many readers, I became a big Reed fan when I, piqued by so many ecstatic reviews of his early work, took a chance on buying a Velvet Underground album without having heard it. It was 1979 by then, and as a 17-year-old, I'd burned through as many classic rock records as my meager funds would allow.

The Velvet Underground and Nico (aka "the banana album"), though — the one I bought at Sam Goody's, where it had somehow continued to linger for who knows how long — was something different. Recorded in 1966 and issued in 1967, it looked at life's riskiest propositions with an unflinching urban realism. The music — with its drones, screeching guitars, violas, and pounding pianos — was just as vital as the lyrics, delivered in Lou's hipper-than-thou deadpan drawl. Yet amidst the largely Lou-written songs about drugs and kinky sex that brought him and the Velvets their greatest notoriety were also beautifully melodic, romantic ballads. In a few years, he'd write one of the greatest odes to the music that had saved his life, "Rock and Roll."

For all the experimental daring of the Velvet Underground, Reed was steeped in rock and roll. Born in 1942 in Brooklyn, and raised on Long Island, he made his first record as part of the Jades back in 1958. After five tough years of making little headway in the backroads of the New York record business, the Syracuse University graduate and John Cale founded the Velvet Underground in 1965. With help from guitarist Sterling Morrison, drummer Maureen Tucker and (at least at first) singer Nico; they not only bridged rock and the avant-garde, but also brought a new sense of literary ambition to their taboo-breaking songs.

The departure of Nico and then Cale (replaced by Doug Yule in late 1968) put the Velvets on a more straightforward but equally uncompromising rock path. Quixotically, Reed quit the Velvets in summer 1970, just as they seemed poised to make a breakthrough from cult band to hit band with songs like "Sweet Jane" and "Rock and Roll." It took a while for his solo career to get off the ground, but he made the transition from underground legend to glam star with help from David Bowie (co-producer of his 1972 LP *Transformer*) and, on his early albums, reworkings of numerous songs he'd first written (and sometimes even recorded) with the Velvet Underground.

Lou made modest inroads into the mainstream with varying degrees of commercial and artistic success over the next few decades. Sometimes he did so with highly ambitious and hard-hitting projects (1989's *New York* album); sometimes with records that made overt or covert nods to the New York scene that had propelled him into prominence (the Andy Warhol tribute-of-sorts *Songs for Drella*, which reunited him with John Cale); and sometimes with endeavors that had no hope of pleasing everyone, like when he teamed up with Metallica for 2011's controversial *Lulu*. For those of us captivated by the Velvet Underground, there was a sense that he might never be as genuine or consistent an artist as a solo act.

Yet for those of us who never thought the mainstream would hail the Velvet Underground to any significant degree, there was a sense of validation when the VU attracted thousands, tens of thousands, and eventually millions of new listeners, often from generations not yet born when Reed was in the band. Just yesterday, an eighth-grader from Maryland interviewed me about the Velvets over the phone for a school oral history project. That would have been unthinkable back when I was in eighth grade in the mid-1970s. Her father, himself aged 45, agreed. He only knew about them when he was her daughter's age because a brother ten years older had some Velvets records.

Aged 71 when he died, Lou Reed was taken from us too soon, despite a recording career that stretched over more than 50 years. But he lived long enough to know that his music had suvived its initial commercial failure to become hailed by listeners not even born in the 20th century. It's an achievement more important than any gold records, and a gift to all of us who collect and care about rock — a form that Reed mastered and innovated in fascinating, inspirational ways that no one who follows him can duplicate. RCN

Richie Unterberger is the author of White Light/White Heat: The Velvet Underground Day-By-Day, 2009 and liner notes to the 2012 box set of The Velvet Underground and Nico. More at: richieunterberger.com.

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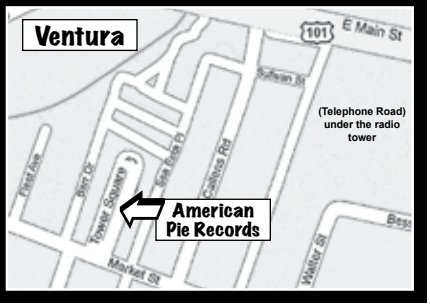

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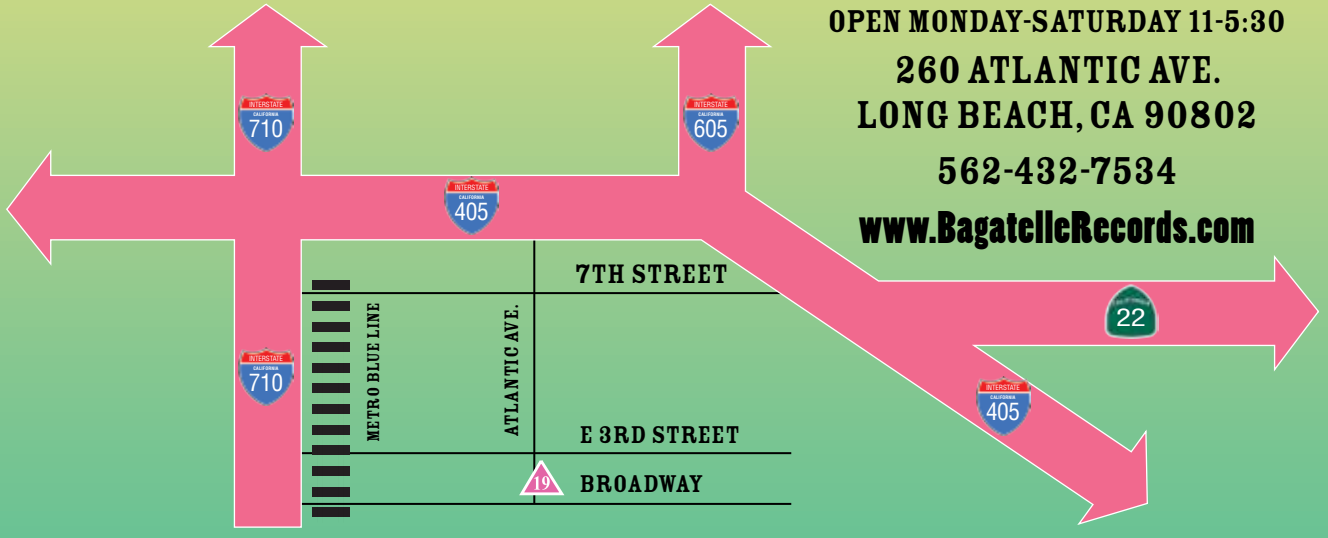

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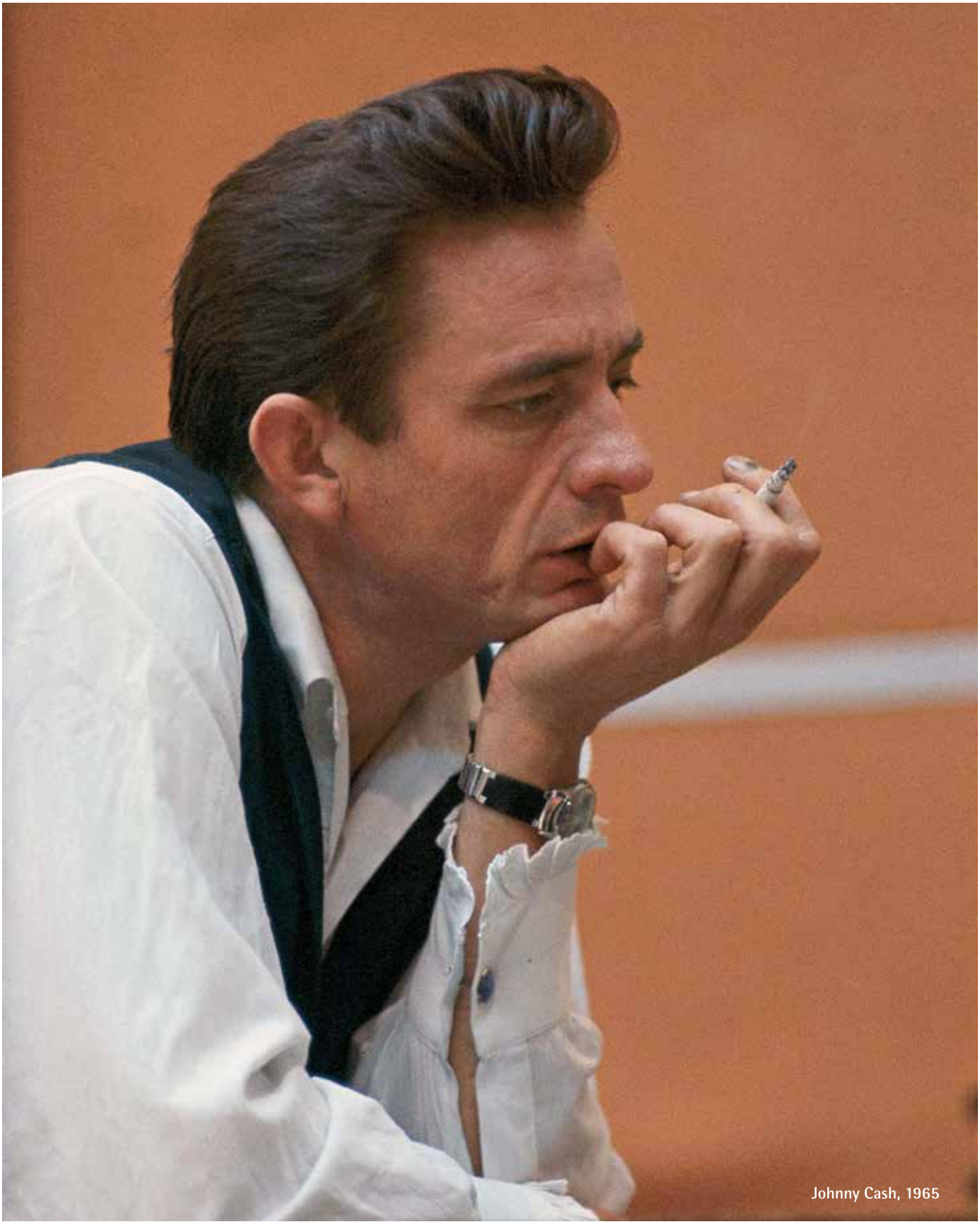

DON HUNTSTEIN/©SONY BMG MUSIC ENTERTAINMENT ARCHIVES

Johnny Cash, 1965

Johnny Cash: Ten Years After

New music releases, a documentary and a book by music critic Robert Hilburn examine The Man in Black

BY HARVEY KUBERNIK

Inducted into both the Country Music Hall of Fame and Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, winner of a Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award, and a Kennedy Center Honor, Johnny Cash on September 12, 2003 left the physical planet at the age of 71. His status in the last decade has only grown as a musical, spiritual, literary and retail influence. Cash and I have the same February 26 birthday.

The 2005 biopic on his life *Walk The Line* grossed more than $300 million and his posthumous albums have totaled over $130 million.

In 2006 his final studio album, *American V: A Hundred Highways* went to number 1 on both the Pop and Country charts.

In 1975 I conducted an interview with Cash in Anaheim, California for *Melody Maker* and Johnny commented about choosing songs to record and perform in his live concert repertoire.

"In concert I sing 'Sunday Morning Coming Down,' the Kris Kristofferson tune, that's so much of me that sometimes I feel like I wrote it. There are some songs that I must write for self-expression. If a song comes along I must acknowledge it. I've recently recorded a song 'Strawberry Shortcake.' It's about a guy who went into the Plaza hotel in New York and stole a cake. It's a novelty song. But there are some songs that I had to write like 'I Walk The Line'."

The Columbia/Legacy label has released a slew of stellar Cash CD reissues and box sets this century. Many Greatest Hits and Best Of packages are constantly available.

In 2012 the company pressed up Johnny Cash-The Complete Columbia Collection. Containing 61 distinct album packages (single and double CDs, totaling 63 discs overall) housed in a box with a lift-off cover. The deluxe product also follows up the critical and commercial success of *The Johnny Cash Bootleg Series*, which has presented four historic releases to date. Released in April, the most recent title in the series is *The Soul Of Truth: Bootleg Vol., IV*, which includes 51 gospel-themed recordings.

In addition, a couple years ago, *Johnny Cash – The Great Lost Performance* was stocked by Island/UME Records. It's the first-ever CD release of a classic 1990 live show, remixed from the original multi-track tapes, with several songs Johnny rarely performed live. Cash and his revue were captured on stage at the Paramount Theatre in Asbury Park, New Jersey on July 27, 1990. The album contains the only concert version of "Life's Railway To Heaven," (the studio version was released posthumously).

Also worth investigating is The Johnny Cash Project, a global collective art project now displayed at: thejohnnycashproject.com.

Participants from all over the world were incorporated into this endeavor initially developed around a music video for "Ain't No Grave" that were strung together and integrated in sequence over the song. New people are encouraged to contribute so this living portrait evolves and is never the same video. The Johnny Cash Project is a collaboration between the Cash Estate, record producer Rick Rubin, Radical Media and digital media artist Aaron Koblin, who leads the Data Arts Team at Google.

JOHNNY AND SAUL

In October 2013 the documentary, *My Father and the Man in Black*, a film by Jonathan Holiff was distributed on DVD by Passion River Studio after a critically acclaimed film festival and theatrical run.

"Heart and feeling is soaked through it like the sweat in Cash's guitar strap," Alan Scherstuhl offered in *The Village Voice*. "A fresh angle on the Cash mythology – a long way from *Walk The Line*," described Steve Rose of *The Guardian*. The New York Times hailed the flick as "complex and haunting," *Variety* lauded it as a "uniquely intertwined dual portrait," while *The Wall Street Journal* reported, "You thought you knew Johnny Cash. Think again!"

The movie DVD includes 20 minutes of extra scenes and is subtitled in French and Spanish is available at many major retailers and at Johnny-And-Saul.com

Holiff was a talent agent at William Morris for a couple of years, later operating a celebrity endorsement agency for fifteen years.

Long before there was Johnny and June, there was Johnny and Saul, from 1960 to 1973.

My Father and the Man in Black is a movie that features one of the 20th century music's known icons while also telling the inside story of Johnny Cash, his talented but troubled manager, Canadian impresario, Saul Holiff, and a son Jonathan, named after Johnny Cash, seeking his father in the shadow of a legend.

Following his dad's 2005 suicide, filmmaker Holiff discovers hundreds of letters and audio diaries, including recorded telephone calls with Johnny Cash during his pill-fueled 1960s, triumphs at Folsom and San Quentin, marriage to June Carter, and his conversion in the early 1970s to born-again Christian.

Director, writer and producer Holiff, over seven and a half years, has assembled these items for a revealing behind-the-scenes view of the complex relationship between

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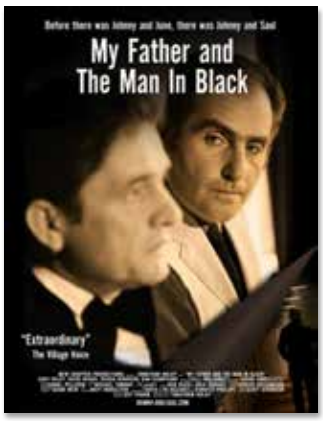
Cash and his long-suffering manager, both struggling with personal demons. The utilization of never-before-seen footage, artifacts, believable re-enactments and voice-over narration serve as a catharsis for its maker.


Before there was Johnny and June, there was Johnny and Saul
My Father and The Man In Black
"Extraordinary"
The Village Voice

Now out is a definitive biography of the Man in Black, Johnny Cash: The Life. Published by Little, Brown and Company, written by author Robert Hilburn, the former music editor of *The Los Angeles Times*.

Hilburn tells the complete story of Johnny Cash for the first time. Of the many great rock and country arrivals in the 1950s, Cash was one of the few who approached his music as more than hits for the jukebox. He wanted to inspire and up lift people. As Hilburn illustrates, Cash was the crucial link between Woody Guthrie's music of social idealism in the 1930s and 1940s and Bob Dylan's music of revolution in the 1960s and beyond.

Singing of love, loss, hardship and faith, Cash was one of the first artists to recognize that he could use his music and fame to impact social attitudes, and offer hope to those downtrodden by society.

Hilburn shares a trove of never before seen material, straight from the singer's inner circle of family and friends.

One testimonial on the back cover of Hilburn's book is supplied by Keith Richard, who wrote, "I listened to that stark unrelenting country as a kid. He was a hero of mine. I met him, finally, in a john at the Waldorf Astoria. He was taking a pee and I broke out into 'Loading Coal.' We both zipped up and sung the final chorus together. One of my most cherished moments. You don't get much closer than that. Hilburn has written a brilliant story of an even more brilliant song writer, warts and all."

ROBERT HILBURN INTERVIEW

Q: When did you first have the concept of doing a Johnny Cash book? Obviously I know you covered Cash's career as a pop music critic for The Los Angeles Times *for 40 years. Why did Johnny Cash always speak to you? You began your journalism career first as a country music reviewer.*

A: That's true. I wanted to write about pop music in the late 1960s and contacted the *Los Angeles Times* and they gave me some free-lance assignments. One of them was going to Folsom Prison in 1968 to cover what turned out to be John's landmark concert. I felt an immediate rapport with him, partially because we both came from small towns in the South (in my case it was the Natchitoches – Campti area of central Louisiana) and we talked a lot about what it was like transitioning to a larger world. After I was hired by The Times, I continued to do stories on John from time to time– including an interview at June's childhood home in Virginia – just months before her death. I didn't think about a book until after John's death when I saw the movie and read some books about him and realized how much more there was to say.

Q: Besides decades of trust and reporting of Johnny Cash, from being at the Folsom Prison live recording in 1968, and later in attendance at some of his last ever shows, why do you think the inner circle of Cash and

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his family opened up to you?

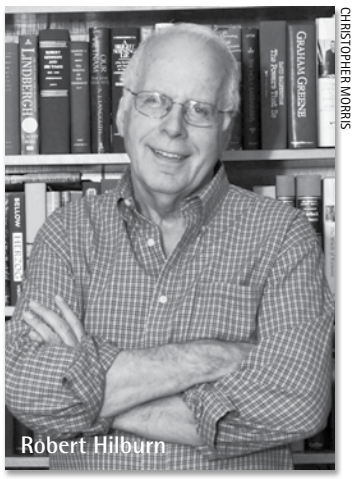
A: I think it was because they knew I had a long association with John and his manager, Lou Robin. It wasn't like a stranger coming into the Cash world. But even with my long association with John, it was hard to get a few people to talk because they were, in a sense, gun-shy. They had been interviewed so many times since John's death and they didn't always like the way their observations were presented. It took, for instance, a year before Marshall Grant agreed to an interview. But I did see him and he was invaluable in helping me understand, among other things, the Sun Records timeline. Things went so well that we were planning to get together a second time, but Marshall died before we were able to do it.

Q: You covered Johnny and June for the paper and saw them perform countless times. You had some archive interviews. Did you start with a self-designed outline? Was chronology always a factor?

A: Absolutely. I wanted to do a formal autobiography.... which meant starting from the beginning rather than trying to take some dramatic incident and make that the first chapter. I noticed that most serious biographies start at the beginning and I wanted the book to serious, though always readable. I think Cash is an enormously important artist and social icon. I wanted to treat him the way historians treated major figures. I wanted this to be able to sit on a "biography" shelf in a record store, not just a "music" shelf.

Q: After doing the book and through the journey, what strikes you more about the Cash records on Sun label than when you first heard them?

A: The quality of the best songs. As a teenager in the 1950s, I just liked Johnny Cash's records because I liked the sound of them—as well as the drama of a song like "Folsom Prison Blues." But now I can see what a great songwriter he was and how even then he was trying to forge his own path. Not always, he wrote a few songs strictly for the jukebox, but the best of the songs were extraordinary. I'm speaking of songs like "Hey, Porter," "Folsom Prison Blues," "I Walk the Line," "Big River," "Give My Love to Rose," "Come in Stranger" and more.



Robert Hilburn

CHRISTOPHER MORRIS

Q: While doing the book, and examining his Columbia Records catalog, the book sort of reinforces that once Johnny had hit records he could do a variety of different albums for the label.

A: Yes, one of the big reasons John left Sam Phillips for Columbia was he wanted artistic freedom, which is something Columbia promised—and it eventually came back to haunt the label because they wanted hits and that wasn't the primary thing on John's mind. Again, he wanted to make music that lifted people up—music that reflected his fascination with people and their struggles; hence so many songs about the Old West and the working man and Native Americans. John wanted to make music that mattered to him; Columbia wanted hits. The issue came to a head in 1963

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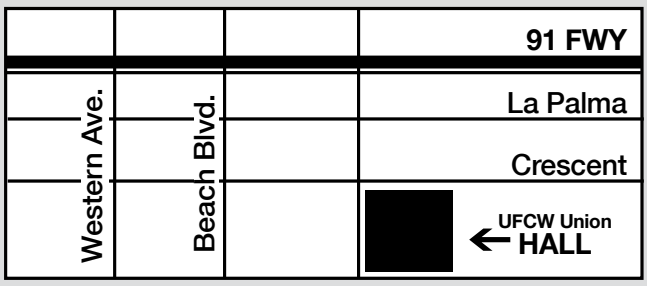

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when his Columbia contract was due to expire. Columbia was going to drop him, but Don Law, who signed John and produced his records, talked them into one more session. They came up with "Ring of Fire" and Columbia did renew the contract. If he hadn't come up with a hit in that session, Columbia, in fact, would have dropped Johnny Cash.

Q: Johnny lived for many years living in Ventura County and then Encino. For decades, books and articles really minimize his years in California. Johnny was always on Town Hall Party, a TV show done in L.A. And, Johnny Cash brought a country music show to the Hollywood Bowl. In 1957 at a party in California Johnny first met British-born record producer Don Law who first suggested to Johnny that he join the Columbia label after his contract with Sun expired on August 1, 1958. Johnny Cash Enterprises was located on Sunset Blvd. at the Crossroads of the World complex in Hollywood.

A: Johnny moved to California in 1958 because he wanted to go into the movies like Elvis and he wanted to separate himself from the conventional thinking of Nashville, the center of country music. He bought Johnny Carson's old house in Encino, just down the street from where the Jackson Family eventually set up its compound. John had some happy years in Encino, but gradually things started going bad. His film debut—in a low budget crime story called *Five Minutes to Live* — was embarrassing, a real disaster. And tensions developed between John and his wife, Vivian, over the career demands that took him away from home so often. Then, the drugs took hold. Looking for a new start, he moved to a small town in Ventura County to escape the glare and pressure of Hollywood. But the tensions and drugs continued. He pretty much stopped coming home. By early 1966, he had pretty much left California and the family behind. He moved to Nashville and spent most of his time with June Carter.

Johnny Cash, 1959

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Q: Can we talk about the Johnny Cash TV series 1969-1971? How seminal was it in exposing musical talent? The Everly Brothers, Tony Joe White, the Monkees, Roger Miller, Judy Collins, Marty Robbins, Loretta Lynn and others were among Johnny's personally invited guests.

I interviewed Johnny in 1975 for Melody Maker *and he told me that his TV series somewhat hampered his creativity. "It cut down on my touring, it became too confining. If it was kept loose and spontaneous it could have been great. But we had to do the same song every eight or ten times before they would accept it. The show lost its feel and*

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honesty. Consequently I lost a lot of interest in it."

A: Though he was often frustrated by some compromises forced on the show by the network, Cash used the show to express his core values. He brought on musical guests he believed in – not just Bob Dylan, but also Merle Haggard, Kris Kristofferson, Waylon Jennings. He used the show as his pulpit, if you will, to once again lift people's spirits. He sang lots of songs about small town America and lots of gospel songs. Three tunes – "Man in Black," "What is Truth" and "Sunday Mornin' Comin' Down" – largely defined Cash for a mass audience, and he became a national icon. People didn't just like John's music; they believed in him. The timing was crucial. If he had gotten a TV show just two years earlier, it would have been a disaster. America would have seen a desperate drug addict. Instead, they saw a national icon.

Q: During my 1975 interview discussion with Johnny for Melody Maker*, we also talked about Bob Dylan. Cash remembered the first time he became aware of Dylan with the release of his* Freewheelin' *album. Columbia Records A&R man, John Hammond, sent Cash an advance copy in late 1961.*

"I knew a lot about him before we had ever met. I thought he was one of the best country singers I had ever heard. I knew he had heard and listened to country music. I heard a lot of inflections from country artists I was familiar with. I always felt a lot in common with him. I was in Las Vegas in 1963 and '64 and wrote him a letter telling him how much I liked his work. I got a letter back and we developed a correspondence. We finally met at Newport in 1965. It was like we were two old friends. There was none of this standing back, trying to figure each other out. He's unique and original. I keep lookin' around as we pass the middle of the seventies and I don't see anybody come close to Bob Dylan. I respect him. Dylan is a few years younger than I am but we share a bond that hasn't diminished. I get inspiration from him."

A: Bob has told me time and again how much he loved John's music and his failure to compromise. The bond was so great between then, even though they didn't spend a lot of time together. Their relationship was more one of mutual inspiration and respect than time spent in each other's company.

Q: The movie Walk The Line *took a Hollywood screen angle, but what did you observe about the Johnny and June couple in person or on stage that made that partnership work?*

A: Marshall Grant told me that if there's a hero in the Johnny Cash story, it has to be June. John didn't always treat June nicely; their relationship was stormy in the 1960s and again in the 1970s and early 1980s. June stuck by him because she believed in him and she thought the bad times would pass. Their relationship has usually been presented as a *fairytale* existence, but it wasn't really until late in their relationship that you could

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apply the words fairy tale in any consistent manner. At the end, however, it was a grand love indeed.

Q: All the Cash relatives and children participated in this book with you. What were these interviews like? Were some forthcoming while others guarded? There is so much documentation available on Johnny. Did they want to give you something different and be accessible?

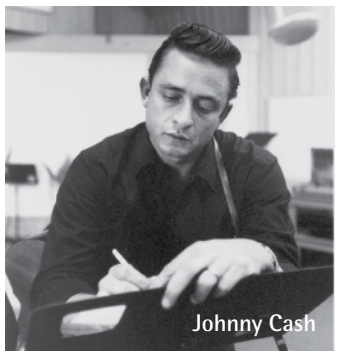
A: Some of the relatives were very guarded; they only wanted to see John's life in rosy terms. But a strong core of the relatives, including John Carter Cash and most of the daughters, wanted the full, accurate story told. Rosanne was particularly strong on that point. I made it clear the book itself would be totally my judgment. No one had any sort of veto power.

Q: Record producer Bob Johnston is an important figure in Johnny's records on Columbia since 1967. Bob's recording methods had impact on Johnny.

A: I spent a lot of time with Bob and I believe he deserves an enormous amount of credit for the Folsom Prison album and some of the other albums he did with John. He not only helped John believe in himself at a time when the drugs and other problems had left him vulnerable, but he organized the Folsom tracks and San Quentin tracks in a way that maximized their impact.

Q: Can you discuss the Cash and Kris Kristofferson friendship and recording collaboration?

A: John was one of the reasons Kris wanted to move to Nashville and pursue songwriting. Kris also found John a fascinating subject for some of his songs, including "To Beat the Devil" and "The Pilgrim Chapter 33," which is as compelling a portrait of John as you can find anywhere. The interesting thing is how long


Johnny Cash

DON HUNTSTEIN/©SONY BMG MUSIC ENTERTAINMENT ARCHIVES

it took John to actually record one of Kris's songs. John took an immediately liking to Kris, but he didn't seriously think about recording a Kris song for years. He had known and passed on even "Sunday Mornin' Comin' Down" for a long time before finally recording it, and the song seemed perfect for John. Once he started believing in Kris, however, John loved his music and took every opportunity to record another Kris song. He even took Kris with him to Newport one time to help Kris find a bigger audience. Their friendship was profound and deep.

Q: The legacy and the myth of Johnny Cash have grown since his work with producer Rick Rubin and his American Records. Your book details the Trent Rezner-penned "Hurt" and subsequent Cash/Rubin studio collaboration and the well-played video of the song.

I interviewed Rubin in 2009 around the time I did a book on the music of Laurel Canyon. Rick at the time described the process of how he and Johnny picked songs to cut. "Johnny and I would exchange CDs of ideas of what songs to record. Sometimes I'd feel stronger about some songs than others. And he would say, "I think I want to do these three.'

"Trent Rezner didn't hear 'Hurt' until it was done. Maybe even when the record was out I sent him a copy. His initial reaction was not great...just because it's just a personal song to him and it freaked him out a

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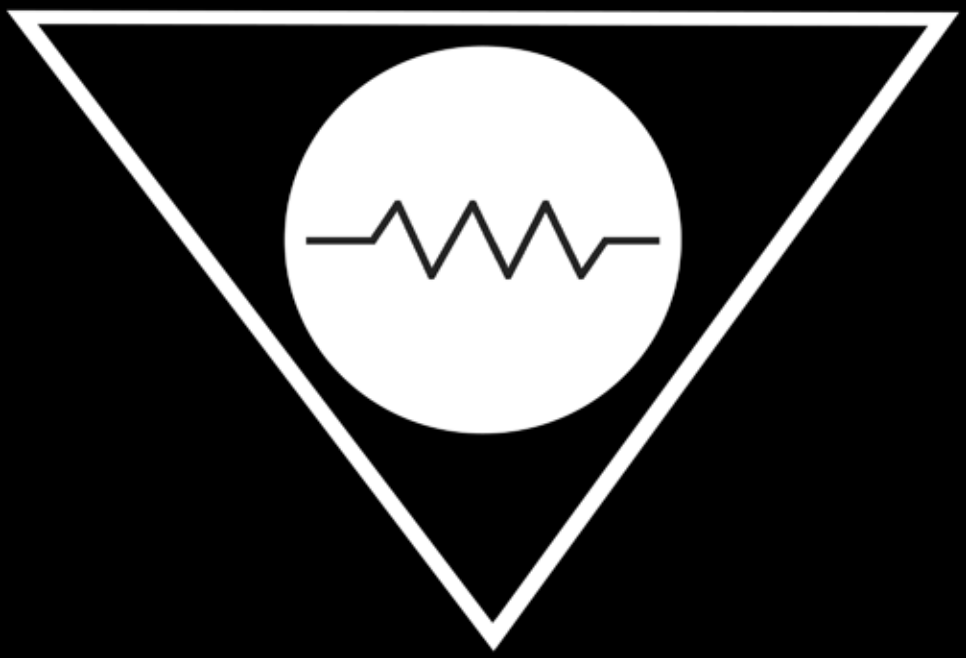

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little bit when he heard it. Then I sent him the video and when he saw the video he freaked out and loved it. The video made him understand it."

What did Rubin deliver besides getting Johnny back on the charts?

A: One of my favorite quotes in the book is about Rick — from Rosanne. Rick entered John's life at a time when he had lost all of his confidence. He not only thought his recording career was over, but he also feared that he had blown his legacy with years of indifferent, poorly received albums. Rick's first challenge was rebuilding John's confidence about his music and about his future. Rosanne's quote, "I think Rick saved his life at that moment. Well, maybe 'saved his life' is too strong, but... maybe not."

Q: What is the world of Johnny Cash? I do realize many Cash fans and record collectors first became aware of him from the "Hurt" record and video. There is a younger demographic buying his catalog.

A: That's true about younger fans learning about him from "Hurt." In fact, W.S. Holland, John's long-time drummer, said something that surprised me. Realizing the tremendous emotional impact of the "Hurt" video, he said, "You know, Johnny Cash may someday be known more for that video than the records we made." And there may be an element of truth to that, so I put a detailed guide to John's recordings in the back of the book — so that someone who did come to John's music via "Hurt" could have a blueprint to what was important before "Hurt," but I also wanted the guide to be of help to someone who only knew John's music from the Sun or Columbia days to pursue the best of his work with Rick. As for legacy, I think John — beyond the great music he left with us — pointed

Johnny Cash

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out the importance of an artist standing for something...not just making music for chart position. He always wanted hits, but he most wanted the music to have a meaning — to himself and his audience. That's something he shared with a lot of people who followed him in country and rock, but it was pretty revolutionary for country and rockers in the 1950s. It's also a lesson that is doubly important today, when so much of the music that does make it onto the airwaves and onto the charts seems to have so little meaning—other than simple entertainment. Johnny Cash wasn't about simply entertainment. Like Bob Dylan, he belongs with the great American artists, whether they are from the worlds of art, film or music. He told about his life and times with a strong, personal vision. RCN

Los Angeles native Harvey Kubernik has been an active music journalist for over 40 years and the author of 5 books, including "This Is Rebel Music" (2002) and "Hollywood Shack Job: Rock Music In Film and On Your Screen" (2004).

In 2009 Kubernik wrote the critically acclaimed "Canyon of Dreams The Magic and the Music of Laurel Canyon." With his brother Kenneth, he co-authored the highly regarded "A Perfect Haze: The Illustrated History of the Monterey International Pop Festival." They also teamed up for a book with photographer Guy Webster slated for summer 2014. In spring 2014, Harvey Kubernik's "Turn Up The Radio! Rock, Pop and Roll in Los Angeles 1956-1972" will be published by Santa Monica Press.

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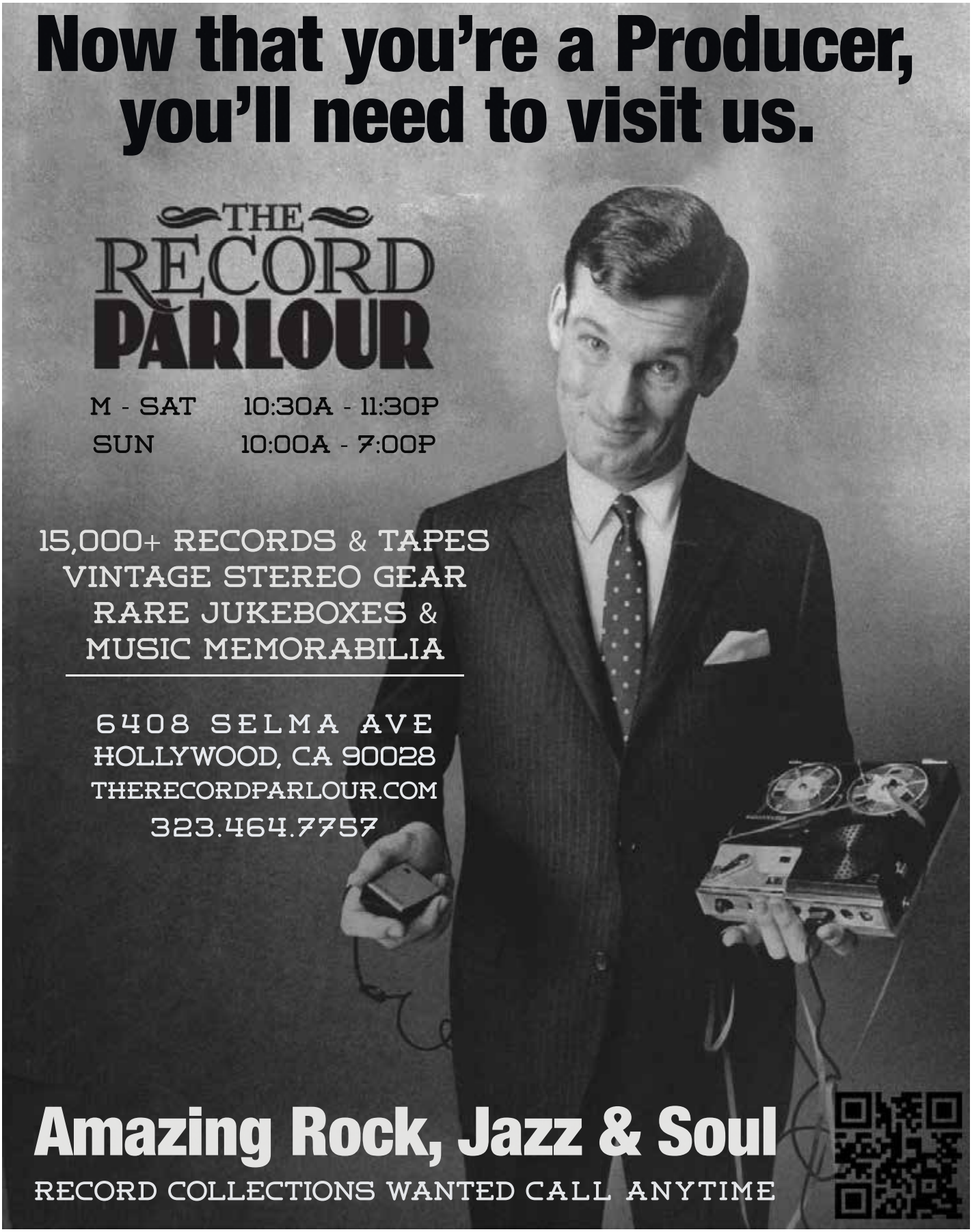

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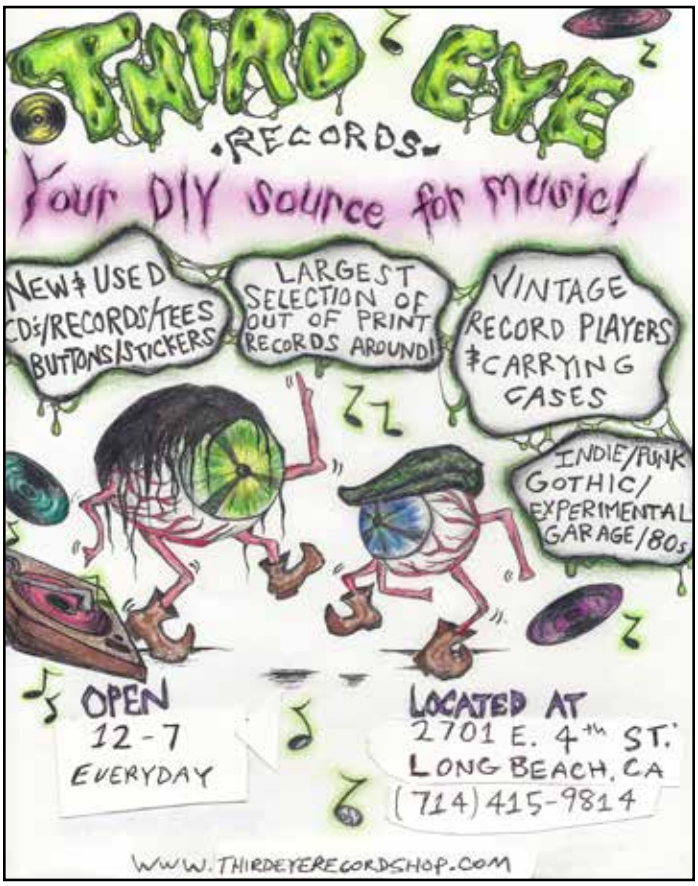
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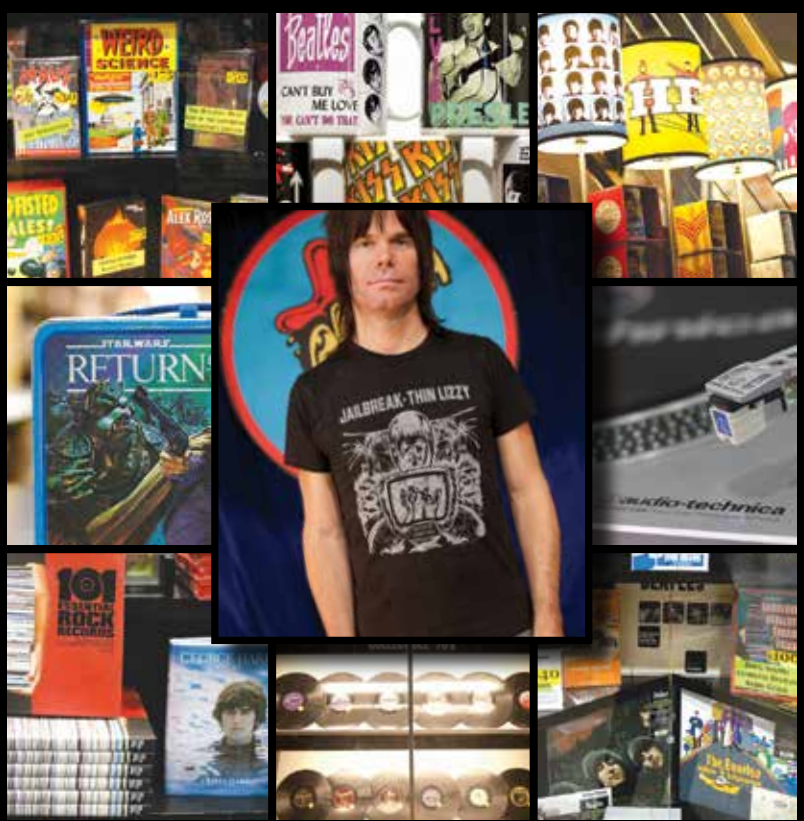

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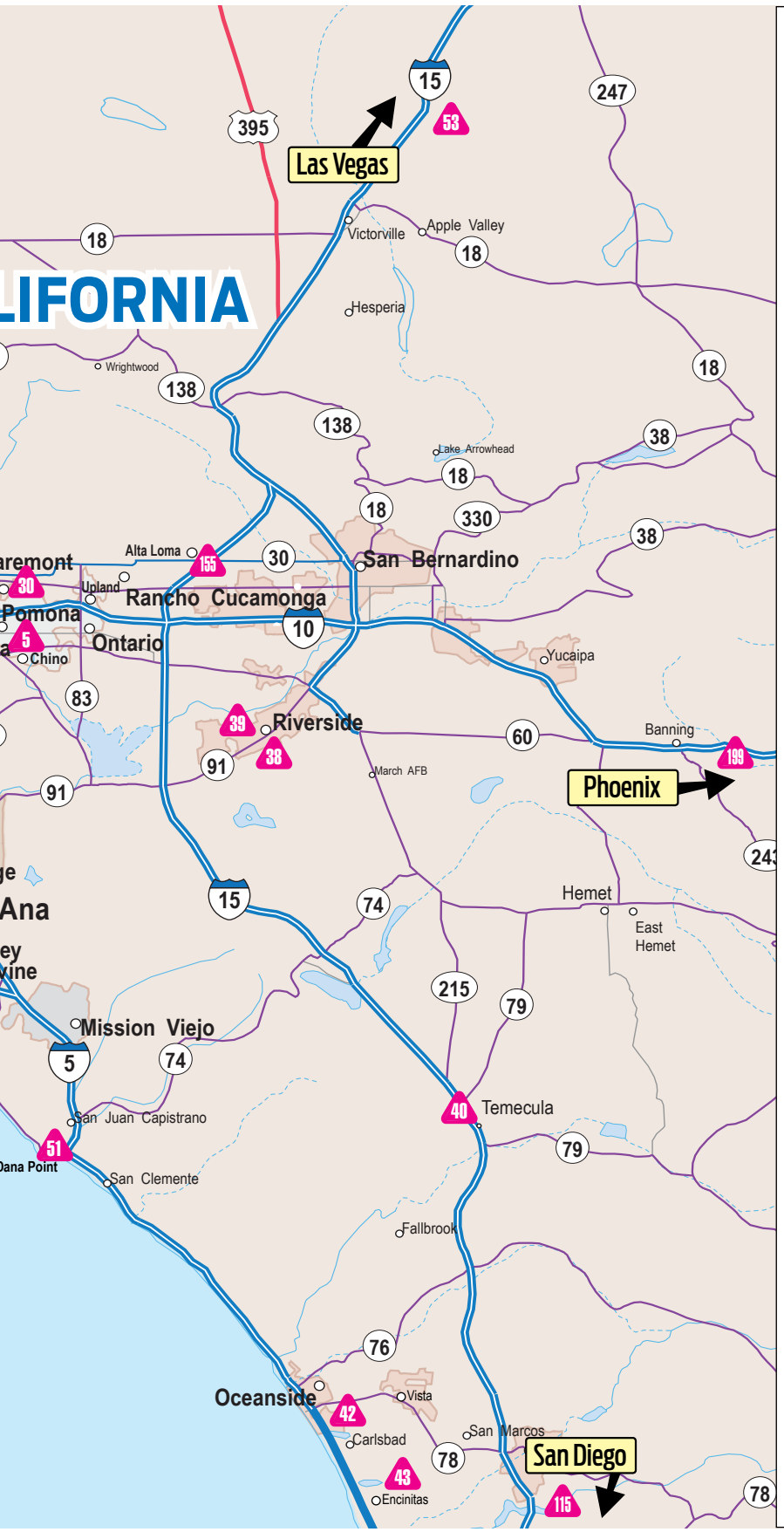

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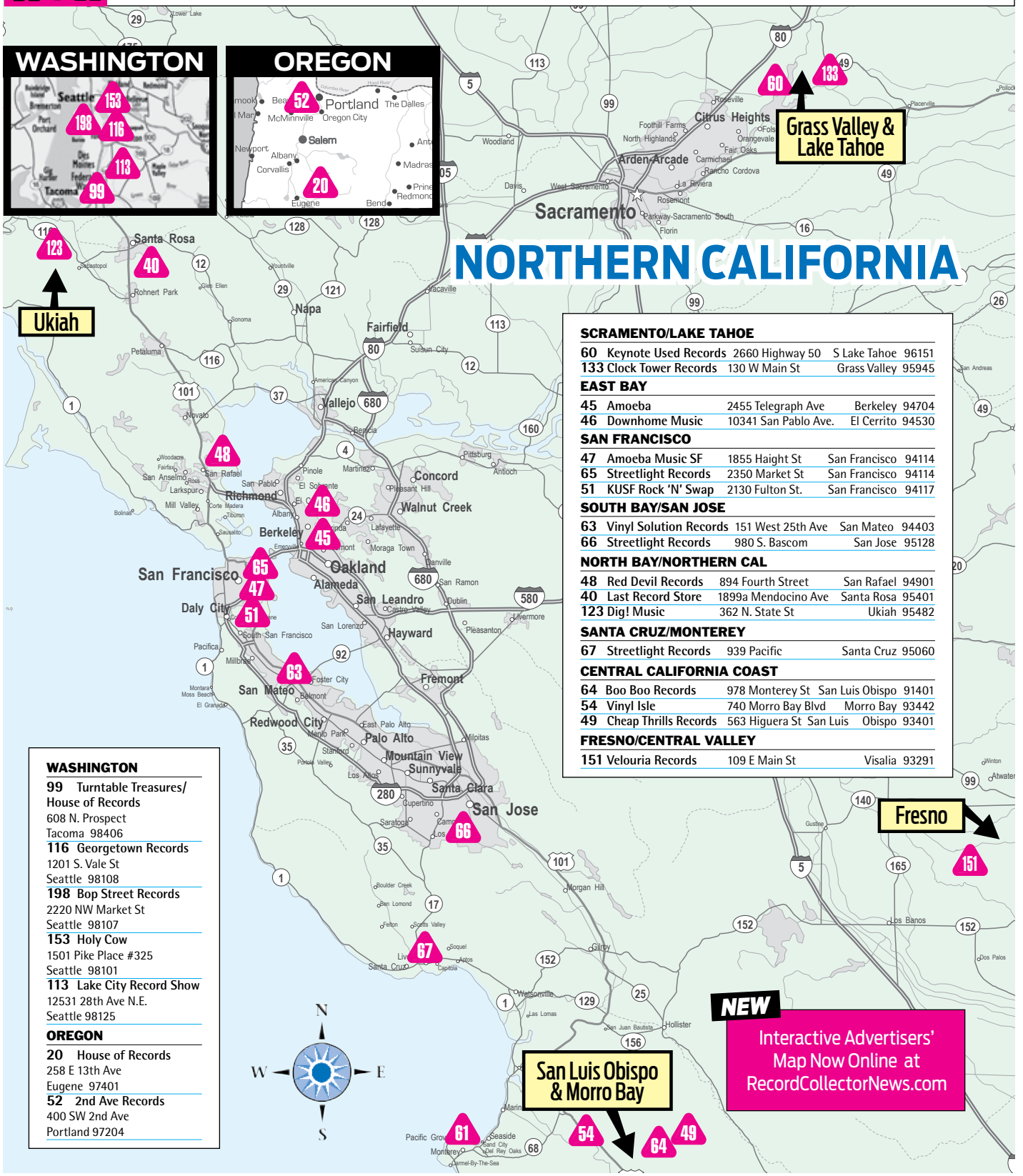

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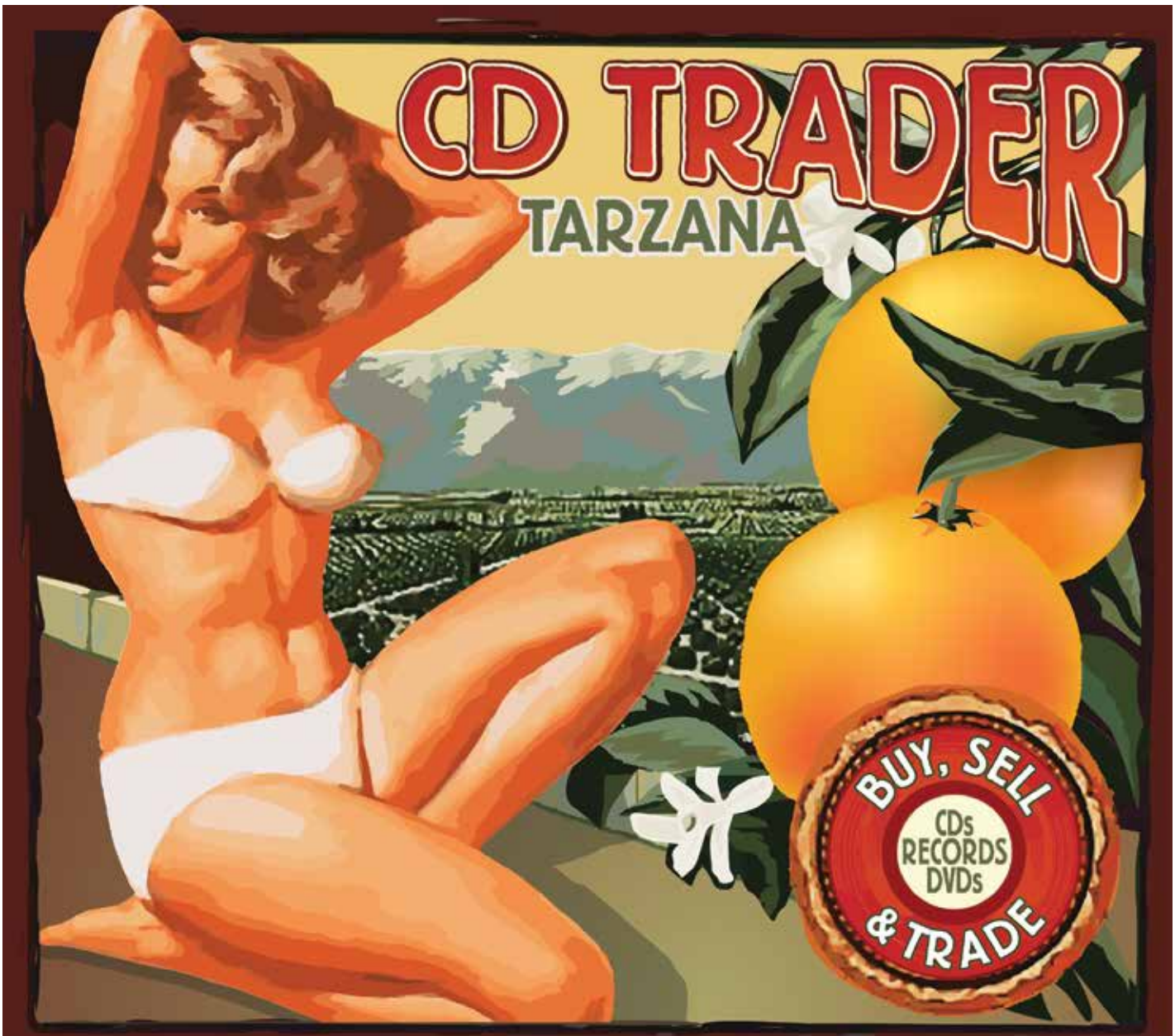

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The Smiths and Morrissey

A Beginners Guide to Collecting

BY RAYMOND ELLIOT

THE 1986 SMITHS' ALBUM, *THE QUEEN Is Dead* is the "greatest album of all time," according to the October 2013 issue of Britain's *NME* magazine, in their list of The Top 500 Best Albums. Not The Beatles, David Bowie, Pink Floyd or Bob Dylan. Of course, this subject could be argued amongst music fans until the human race takes its last breath. What is clear is that they are the most influential rock band to come out of the 1980s. A band from the '80s, who are not an '80s band. In five short years (1982-1987), The Smiths would also solidify themselves as one of the top bands in history.

The Smiths, formed in Manchester England in 1982 when guitarist Johnny Marr got together with lead singer Steven Patrick Morrissey. Drummer Mike Joyce and bassist Andy Rourke would join up shortly thereafter.

Signed to the small, independent label Rough Trade, The band would only make four studio albums. *The Smiths* (1984), *Meat Is Murder* (1985), *The Queen Is Dead* (1986) and *Strangeways Here We Come* (1987). They also released several compilation albums, most notably *Hatful Of Hollow* (1984), *Louder Than Bombs* (1987) and *The World Won't Listen* (1987). Other "Best Of" and "Singles" collections have followed as well.

Luckily for the fans, The Smiths have released over 20 singles in the U.K. alone. Of course these releases come in several different formats. 7" and 12" vinyl records, CD singles and a few cassette singles. There are also many different pressings in various other countries of all of the band's releases. Collecting them has become a heartfelt obsession of mine and many other fans.

The Smiths, 1984

TOM SHEEHAN

There are many reasons for fans to start collecting The Smiths vinyl. First, are the songs themselves. Followed by the striking cover artwork. I'm still surprised that many fans don't know that there is a message imprinted on the inner part of most of the Smiths vinyl releases. Take a closer look, if you haven't already.

If you are old enough to have been around during the '80s and '90s, you probably have a good head start on your Smiths/Morrissey collection. If you're just starting out, you're in for a pleasurable, if expensive experience.

First off, you should be able to easily find all of The Smiths albums, remastered by Johnny Marr, which are available through Rhino and Rhino UK. They've done a great job with these reissues, although the retail cost is very high. Also, a few of the Morrissey albums have been rereleased, some with new, updated covers and different songs. Almost all of the original Smiths and Moz 7" singles have been reissued in import box sets, although they have left out a few. Personally, I'm very happy that they have not yet reissued the 12" singles and hopefully they never do. I'm guessing the cost of production makes this non-feasible.

Of course, getting your hands on as much vinyl is first and foremost. But, for the hardcore collectors, it's the promotional items that are the real prizes. From the promo CDs and records, to the posters, tour merchandise, test pressings, magazines, backstage passes, cassette and VHS tapes, DVDs and autographed items (Beware of counterfeits, it's a huge problem).

When I think back to the mid '90s and my trips to local L.A. record stores, I recall being able to easily find some original Smiths and Morrissey 12" singles and albums. If you're seeking these items nowadays, be prepared to pay a hefty sum. That's if you can actually find anything that hasn't been gobbled up by the hardcore fans. Even the Post-Smiths, Morrissey vinyl is becoming quite hard to find. Some of which, have not been reprinted since their initial releases. I've recently seen copies of Morrissey's *Southpaw Grammar*

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for $60-$120. There really is no official price guide for any of these collectible records – just what fans are willing to pay. I'm afraid that eBay is the best, if not riskiest way to find what you're looking for. Just don't get too discouraged; there are still some good deals out there.

Lately, it seems posters have become the hot item with collectors. Maybe because the fans are getting a bit older and are having them framed as artwork. This has been the case with the collectors I have spoken to. The original Smiths promotional Rough Trade "Cartel" posters have seen prices skyrocket as their scarcity increases with time. The other ones which have become increasingly tough to find, are the giant 60"x40" Subway posters of both The Smiths and Morrissey. I know of a few fans who have paid $75.00 and more for these.

I've been very lucky with my collection. I got started while working at Hot Rocks Records in Covina. We had a really good import distributor in England at the time that would get the new releases to us before any other stores in California. I usually made sure to grab one copy the CDs and vinyl, as well as the UK subway posters. My collection grew rather quickly.

I also lucked out, when I got to spend two days in Manchester. It was about a month after the 1997 Pasadena Smiths Convention. Mike Joyce and Andy Rourke were nice enough to give me a tour of the city. After seeing all the best Smiths-related spots, I got the chance to see Mike's personal collection in his basement. He had multiple vinyl copies of every Smiths release, which he then proceeded to give me. One each of every LP and 12" and three-to-four copies of each 7". Yes, I know very well that this is not the way most Smiths' collectors got started.

Before I discovered The Smiths and Morrissey, I would always read all the lyrics on the liner notes from my other records in my collection. It was a must for me, although most of my friends had no idea, nor did they care what the lyrics meant to the songs they were hooked on. So when I first understood the meaning of the Smiths song "Rubber Ring," I knew I had discovered something different from what I was used to. Sure, other songs told stories, but this was the song speaking directly to me. Basically saying: "don't forget me as you get older."

To me, The Smiths career mirrored that of James Dean, one of their heroes. It was over almost before it began. They called it quits at the absolute peak. Maybe this is a good thing. They left us with musical gold. I really don't think that The Smiths ever made a bad song. This is something no other band that I know can claim.

I once asked Johnny Marr if he would sign a few Smiths 7" records, to give away as prizes at the annual Smiths/Morrissey Convention. He nodded his head and as he was signing the "Last Night I Dreamt That Somebody Loved Me" cover... He pointed to it and said: "This is my favorite Smiths song." I said: "Too bad you guys never played it on tour." He countered with: "We toured enough." RCN

The 2014 Smiths/Morrissey Convention will take place on Sunday March 30th at The Avalon in Hollywood. musicconventions.com

If you'd like to see some of the collectible items, there are a few very good websites out there, starting with these: thesmiths.cat/, passionsjustlikemine.com/ and also, vulgarpicture.com/

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Morrissey: Singular Triumph

Portrait of the Solo Artist as a Young Man

BY ELIZABETH STREET

UPON THE DEPARTURE OF GUITARIST Johnny Marr just weeks before the release of, *Strangeways Here We Come*, The Smiths called it a day at the height of their popularity.

Morrissey was now an I, and the path he would tread from that moment on was that of the solo artist. While staying aboard the Smiths' U.S. label Reprise, Morrissey would leave Rough Trade to sign on with Parlaphone in the UK

Within six months following the Smiths' final album, Morrissey released his first solo album, *Viva Hate*, in March 1988. Working with former Smiths engineer and producer Stephen Street, Vini Reilly (Durutti Column) and Andrew Parisi, the *Viva Hate* sessions proved fruitful for Morrissey. Accompanied by singles "Suedehead" and "Everyday Is Like Sunday" which both landed in the UK Top 10, *Viva Hate* reached the top spot on the UK Albums Chart upon its release. The album was certified Gold by the RIAA. *Viva Hate* was originally going to be called *Education in Reverse*, and in Australia and New Zealand some LPs were released with that title.

As with the Smiths, Morrissey's output continued to be prolific, releasing singles "The Last of the Famous International Playboys," "Interesting Drug," "Ouija Board, Ouija Board," "November Spawned a Monster" and "Piccadilly Palare." These singles along with the bulk of the B-sides would make up *Bona Drag*, a compilation of Morrissey's from 1989-1990. Both "The Last of the Famous International Playboys" and "Interesting Drug" would reach top 10 in the UK, while "Piccadilly Palare" and "Ouija Board, Ouija Board," both reached #2 on the Modern Rock chart in the U.S. *Bona Drag* was certified Gold by the RIAA.

Kill Uncle, released in March of 1991 found Morrissey working with guitarist Mark E. Nevin of Fairground Attraction as his musical partner. Alan Winstanly and Clive Langer who have their own impressive resume working Elvis Costello, Madness, and Lloyd Cole were charged with producing Morrissey's second album. Though treading new territory both professionally and sonically, Morrissey was able to deliver singles, "Our Frank" to the #2 spot on the Modern Rock chart in the U.S. and "Sing Your Life" into the top 10 for His Master's Voice and EMI.

Kill Uncle also ushered in the one element that Morrissey had been lacking since the days of the Smiths, a tour. Nearly five years removed from the final Smiths show, Morrissey recruited Boz Boorer (The Polecats) and Alain Whyte, who would both go on to serve as Morrissey's co-songwriters for the next string of albums. Boorer assembled a line-up that included other musicians from the London rockabilly scene, Gary Day and Spencer Cobrin. Together the five would tour to sold-out shows across the UK and the U.S. where Morrissey's star was shining brighter than the Smiths in terms of popularity.

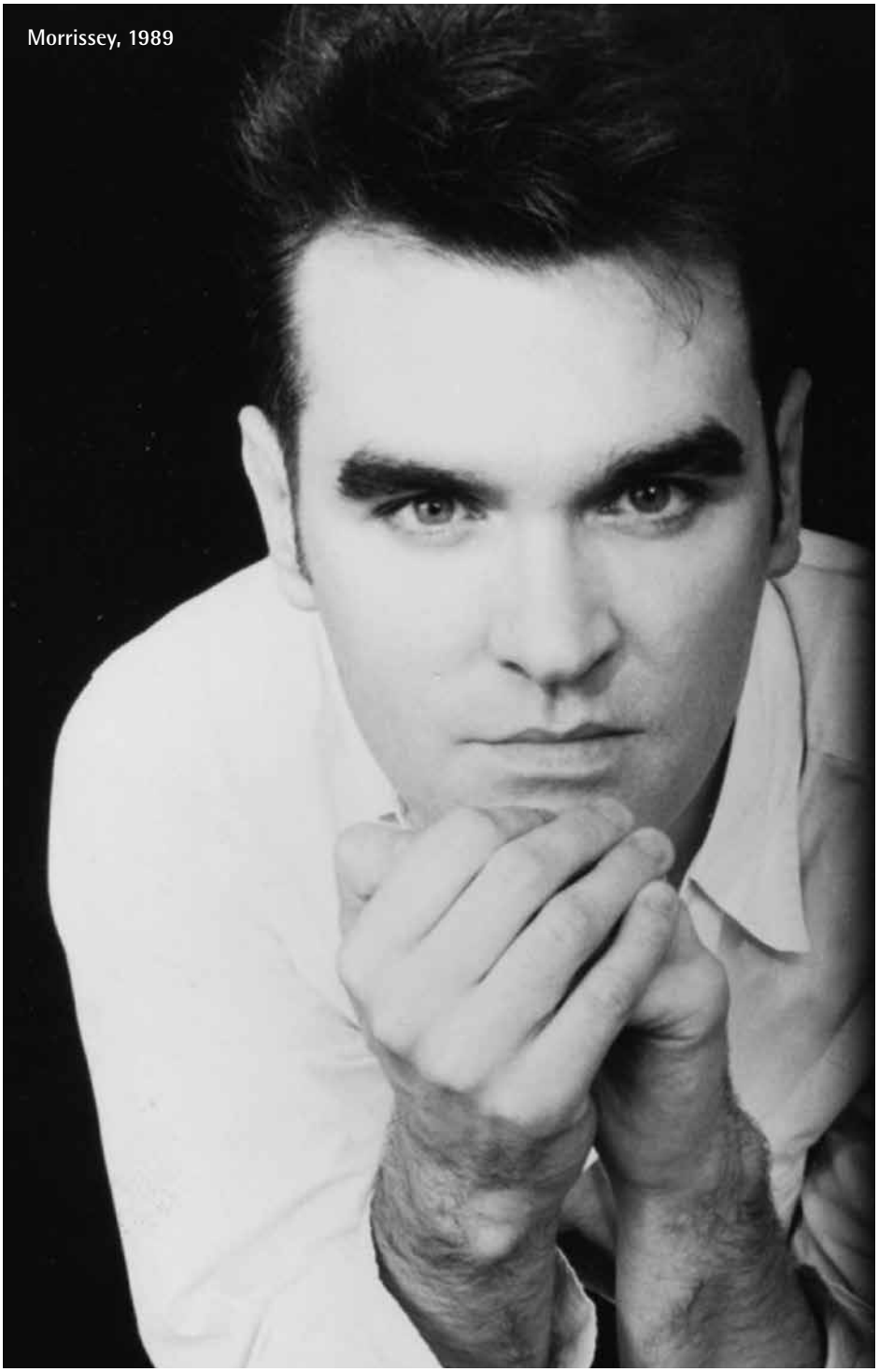
Working with former Smiths engineer and producer Stephen Street, Vini Reilly (Durutti Column) and Andrew Parisi, the *Viva Hate* sessions proved fruitful for Morrissey.

Upon completion of the *Kill Uncle* tour and following Morrissey's penchant for keeping busy, the new band joined Mick Ronson (ex-Bowie guitarist) in the studio to commence recording on *Your Arsenal*. Keeping with Morrissey's feverish pace, the album was released in 1992. Four singles were released, "You're the One for Me, Fatty" and "Certain People I Know" in the UK along with "Glamorous Glue" and "Tomorrow" in the U.S. "Tomorrow" would reach #1 on the Modern Rock chart in the U.S., while *Your Arsenal* was nominated for a Grammy. Appearances on *The Tonight Show* and *Saturday Night Live* thrust the cult of Morrissey and the legend of the Smiths into the international spotlight.

Another wildly successful tour, this time in support of *Your Arsenal*, found Morrissey breaking arena records for sell-outs throughout the US and the UK, and solidifying Morrissey's place on top of the Indie/Alternative mountain. The seed had been planted with the Smiths and now just a few years removed, a new generation of fans emerged from their bedrooms to pay homage to their champion. Sadly, less than a year after the release of *Your Arsenal*, Mick Ronson passed away.

Hot on the heels of *Your Arsenal* and the world tour that followed, Morrissey flanked by Boorer and Whyte join producer Steve Lillywhite in studio to create Morrissey's second number one album, *Vauxhaul and I*. The single, "The More You Ignore Me, the Closer I Get" reached #46 on the *Billboard* Hot 100, which is the only song by Morrissey or The Smiths to garner mainstream airplay in the U.S. and peaked at #8 in the UK. Widely hailed as a masterpiece and voted amongst Q magazine and NME's Top Albums Ever (not just for 1994), *Vauxhaul and I* found Morrissey at his ironic and introspective best. He would later confide that he expected the album to be his last.

To the relief of many fans, *Southpaw Grammar* found its way onto record store shelves in August of 1995. Again with the aide of Boorer and Whyte, the album shot up to number four in the UK charts despite the two singles, "Dagenham Dave" and "The Boy Racer" failing to crack the top 20. In a true departure from form, *Southpaw Grammar* stands apart from its predecessors. Although not short of pop tunes and Morrissey's ever-impressive writing, the album contained two songs clocking in over the 10-minute mark and was limited to eight tracks in total. Though unique in both style (drum solo introductions, Shostakovich samples, etc.) and length, *Southpaw Grammar* is at once dynamic, forceful and a brave departure for an artist who refuses to take the easy road when it comes to his work.


KATE GARNER

Morrissey, 1989

With the 1997 release of *Maladjusted*, Morrissey, along with Boorer and Whyte, had now outlived the Smiths in term of time served. And with that, the band delivered a return to form harking back to *Vauxhaul and I* and *Maladjusted* was ushered out into the world. With the single "Alma Matters" leading the charge into the UK top 20 and follow up singles, "Roy's Keen" and "Satan Rejected My Soul" representing the fruits of the *Maladjusted* sessions, this would be Morrissey's final release for seven years.

Seven years can be a lifetime. For an artist of Morrissey's prominence, this time served as a visible void in the topography of the music world. As an artist known equally for his quality of work and regimen with relentless touring and recording, the layoff was remarkable and provoked fear and unrest from his most staunch supporters that they might have seen the last of Morrissey as a recording artist. While catching the odd show as the band dotted the map with shows throughout the world, fans were introduced to new unreleased songs.

You Are the Quarry was released in spring 2004 on revived label Attack Records (Sanctuary). Upon returning, Morrissey (still co-conspiring with Boorer and Whyte) released an unabashed and vital collection that was praised by fans and critics alike, which further cemented the singer's place as a true one-of-a-kind. With his absence now a thing of the past and single "Irish Blood, English Heart" receiving substantial airplay in the US and landing at #3 in the UK charts, *You Are the Quarry* just missed the top spot on the UK charts settling in at #2. In total four singles from the album reached the UK top 10 and Morrissey was back and more popular than ever.

With long time musical director Boz Boorer at his side and the looming departure of Alain Whyte from the fold, Morrissey enlisted guitarist Jesse Tobias to join the ranks. With the release of 2006 *Ringleader of the Tormentors* entered the UK charts at #1. Recorded in Rome with Tony Visconti (Bowie, T-Rex) and a guest string arrangement written and conducted by the legendary Ennio Morricone, the album revealed a power and lushness that rarely appears within the same collection of songs, as well as four more singles, "You Have Killed Me," "The Youngest Was the most Loved," "In the Future When All's Well" and "I Just Want to See the Boy Happy."

Once again picking up the pace that is wholly Morrissey-esque, winter of 2007 caught the man and his band back in the recording studio with legendary producer Jerry Finn, who had also produced *You Are the Quarry*. *Years of Refusal* was the outcome and despite poor support from labels Decca and Lost Highway, *Years of Refusal* reached #3 in the UK charts and #11 in the US upon its release in 2009. Singles include "I'm Throwing My Arms Around Paris" and "Something Is Squeezing My Skull."

Morrissey has stated he has an entire album of material ready to be released with the proper label backing, as well as indicated he might retire in 2014. In either event or both, Morrissey and his place in music history will continue to grow beyond the legendary status that has already been bestowed upon him. His work both as a solo artist and with The Smiths will find a new audience with each passing year and the importance of his will be celebrated and acclaimed for generations to come. RCN

2013: The Year of Fuzz

This reissue of a classic recording is something to get jazzed about

BY LANCE BARRESI

WHILE EVERYONE ELSE was talking Miley Cyrus this year, we here at Permanent were talking fuzz! Not the peach stuff on your bratty nephew's upper lip, the kind that only comes from the gnarliest of distortion pedals. Fuzz has been around for ages, but it's been years since so much fuzz has been released on vinyl. Sadly, most of it came from overseas.

Two new UK labels released some of the best fuzz-laden records of the decade and they weren't shy about it either. Cardinal Fuzz and Fuzz Club collectively released 13 slabs of thick, distorted limited edition vinyl this year and I think all of them are worth your attention. A new band by an old friend reared its fuzzy head this year as well. Ty Segall's Fuzz snuck their debut single out in late-December of 2012, but they're still getting the honor of best new band of 2013! Ty plays drums in Fuzz, but I wouldn't be surprised, if his Death By Audio Fuzz War pedal was used in the making of the band's four records released this year.

CARDINAL FUZZ

THE LEEDS/STALYBRIDGE-BASED Cardinal Fuzz imprint has been functioning independently since 2012. UK psych stalwarts The Heads and baby heads like Hookworms both worked with the label in 2012, but Cardinal Fuzz really hit it's stride in 2013. Here are some Permanent descriptions of the label's 2013 releases:

COSMIC DEAD "THE COSMIC DEAD" LP

GOT A SPARE 80 MINUTES? THEN saddle up and buckle in cuz the Glaswegian star cruisers Cosmic Dead unleash four side-long pieces of interstellar, head nod, psych rawk brilliance. Hell, sides three and four are one goddamned track! Cosmic Dead crank up the volume and let loose slow burn space rock that takes the listener on an extended tour of the universe with wailing fuzz guitar, snaking bass grooves and precision drumming.

JANITORS "DRONE HEAD" LP

JANITORS ARE BRINGING SLOW burn, fuzzed out, desert rock psychedelia and they are bringing it big! *Drone Head* is top-notch spacerock/shoegaze/psychrock from start to finish. An album of steady head nod rockers with fried guitars, pounding drums, searing drones and down in the mix vocals is what one will find on *Drone Head*. So, if you dig the above mentioned Loop, Spacemen 3 and JAMC then grip this one now.

HILLS "HILLS LIVE" LP

HILLS FREAKOUT PSYCHEDELIA is alive and burning! This live testament is a fuzzed out drone ceremony of heavy psychrock a la late '60s/early '70s hypno love-in happenings. Another album of pure win all the way through.

VISION FORTUNE "NIGHT JUKES" 12"

IF YOU WERE FORTUNATE ENOUGH to snag a copy of their Oop LP *Mas Fiestas con el Gruppo Vision Fortune* on Great Pop Supplement then you know what the score is — intense, hypnotic and repetitive grooves that ooze into your earholes like the sweatiest of peyote-fueled bad trips.

DEAD SEA APES / DEAD SEA APES & BLACK TEMPEST "THE SUN BEHIND THE SUN" LP

SUN BEHIND THE SUN IS A spectacular work of tension and release. Three gargantuan tracks unfold with swirling electronics, snail paced guitar work, subtle drumming, washes of cymbals to create worlds of their own. These cuts float along, yet convey an ominous vibe while the hypnotic sonics slowly engulf the listener with wave after wave of spiraling kosmische splendor!

Fuzz has been around for ages, but it's been years since so much fuzz has been released on vinyl.

FUZZ CLUB

FUZZ CLUB IS A "LONDON BASED independent record label focusing on raw, experimental rock 'n' roll, influenced by psychedelia, shoegaze, noise, garage, blues, folk and experimentation." Heavy emphasis on the psych-edelia! The label has been in operation since 2012 and more than doubled their discography this year. Previous releases by Dead Skeletons, Wands, Sonic Jesus, Lucid Dream, Underground Youth and Singapore Sling all rung my bell, here are some Permanent descriptions of the label's 2013 releases:

PIATCIONS "HEAVEN'S SINS" 12"

KILLER 12-INCH FROM THIS Italian band and their debut for Fuzz Club Records! Piatcions unleash a hurricane of noise and reverb over these three extended tracks, droning with sparse and trance-like vocals cascading in and out o'er the din — it's like a psychedelic tsunami! The band's repetitive riffing and stratosphere-reaching guitar heroics are cold and pummeling, reminding us of the best and more avant-leaning from the British shoegaze scene of the late-'80s — think Loop and early Godflesh more than Spacemen 3 or Jesus and Mary Chain. It's a dark, hallucinatory ride that seems more like a musical ritual than the playing of a record. Really bewitching and has us hungry for more. Full-length album ASAP, please and thank you. This one is a keeper, but act fast — it's limited to 300 copies (pressed up on snazzy silver vinyl too!)

DEAD RABBITS "THE TICKET THAT EXPLODED" LP

THIS UK ACT NICKED THE TITLE of their record from the William Burroughs novel, a sly move that quickly caught our eye and piqued our interest. Dead Rabbits are plying the mid tempo psychedelic shoegaze sounds in the tradition of groups like Loop, Swervedriver, Black Angels and Spiritualized with a classic '60s tambourine stomp added to the soaring guitars and distorted bass. Lush vocals and a steady backbeat combined with droning keyboards added to the mix make for a seriously slick album of buzzing shoegaze strutters. This **continued**

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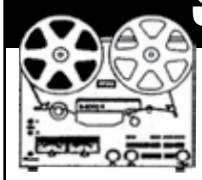

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album comes housed in a full color gatefold sleeve and clocks in at just under 45 minutes. *The Ticket That Exploded* takes its time and stretches out letting each track apex and burn out to its natural conclusion.

THIRD SOUND "THE THIRD SOUND OF DESTRUCTION AND CREATION" LP

GLEAMING GUITARS, THICK SUSTAINED bass lines, a steady beat, shimmering keyboards and breathy almost whispered vocals drive this record of slow burn spiritual psychedelia. Hints of Spiritualized, label mates Singapore Sling and Underground Youth, a touch of the Bad Seeds dark beauty and nuance is making for some lovely listening indeed. *The Third Sound Of Destruction And Creation* is a hand-numbered edition of 250 on thick black wax.

UNDERGROUND YOUTH "PERFECT ENEMY FOR GOD" LP

PERFECT ENEMY FOR GOD FINDS Underground Youth honing in further on their sound with lush production work, dreamy blurred vocals and sophisticated dynamics ushered into their late night psychedelic invocations. *Perfect Enemy For God* is uber limited (300 copies) and comes pressed up on some thick high quality wax.

BLACK LIZARD "BLACK LIZARD" 10"

It's not just Brian Jonestown Massacre that's stoked about Black Lizard, count us in too. Their garage cavestomp approach to blistering psych rock reminds us of Black Mountain, Cosmonauts, the Warlocks and Comets On Fire all swirled into one heady mix of feedback and guitar fireworks.

RADAR MEN FROM THE MOON "ECHO FOREVER" LP

RADAR MEN FROM THE MOON is a space rock trio from the Netherlands who dish out high-energy psychedelic sonics. They've got mind twisting electronics jamming enemy signals as the guitar scorches like so many solar flares while the drums and bass keep the coordinates on path to the heart of the sun and beyond. These six instrumental jams explore the deepest realms of the universe with lots of quality grade fuzz and orbital splendors bringing' pleasing sounds to your ears. Fans of Earthless, White Hills, Lumerians, Cave, Telescopes, Oneida and Mugstar best hop on this voyage into groovy territory.

FUZZ

AT THE END OF 2012, TY SEGALL promised to "slow down this year." By "slow down," Ty actually meant "form a new band called Fuzz, release two singles and two LPs, tour a shitload, put out a solo record unlike anything he's ever released, tour on it, and sneak out a couple reissues and an LP of "Twins" demos. I can't fathom what "kick it up a notch" might mean to a guy like Ty.

Fuzz's debut "This Time I Got A Reason" single came out in the waning weeks of 2012 and the first pressing of 500 copies was sold out by 2013 and fetching insane amounts on eBay less then a month after it's release. Thankfully, Trouble In Mind has repressed it and it's available again for a reasonable price, with a different sleeve variation and on black vinyl, mind you. The follow-up singles, "Sunderberry Dream" and "Sleigh Ride" came out and went out (of print, that is) in just a few months and the highly anticipated, eponymous Fuzz LP was on our decks just a few months before New Year's. And if that weren't enough, Mr. Oh Sees himself, released a monster *Live In San Francisco* LP on his own Castle Face imprint.

Fans of vintage heaviness a 'la Blue Cheer, Black Sabbath, and King Crimson (Fuzz covers "21st Century Schizoid Man") will dig Fuzz...like, for sure, maaaaaaaaaaan. RCN

To read the full descriptions and sample audio of all of our favorite 2013 releases, cruise on over to PermanentRecordsLA.com

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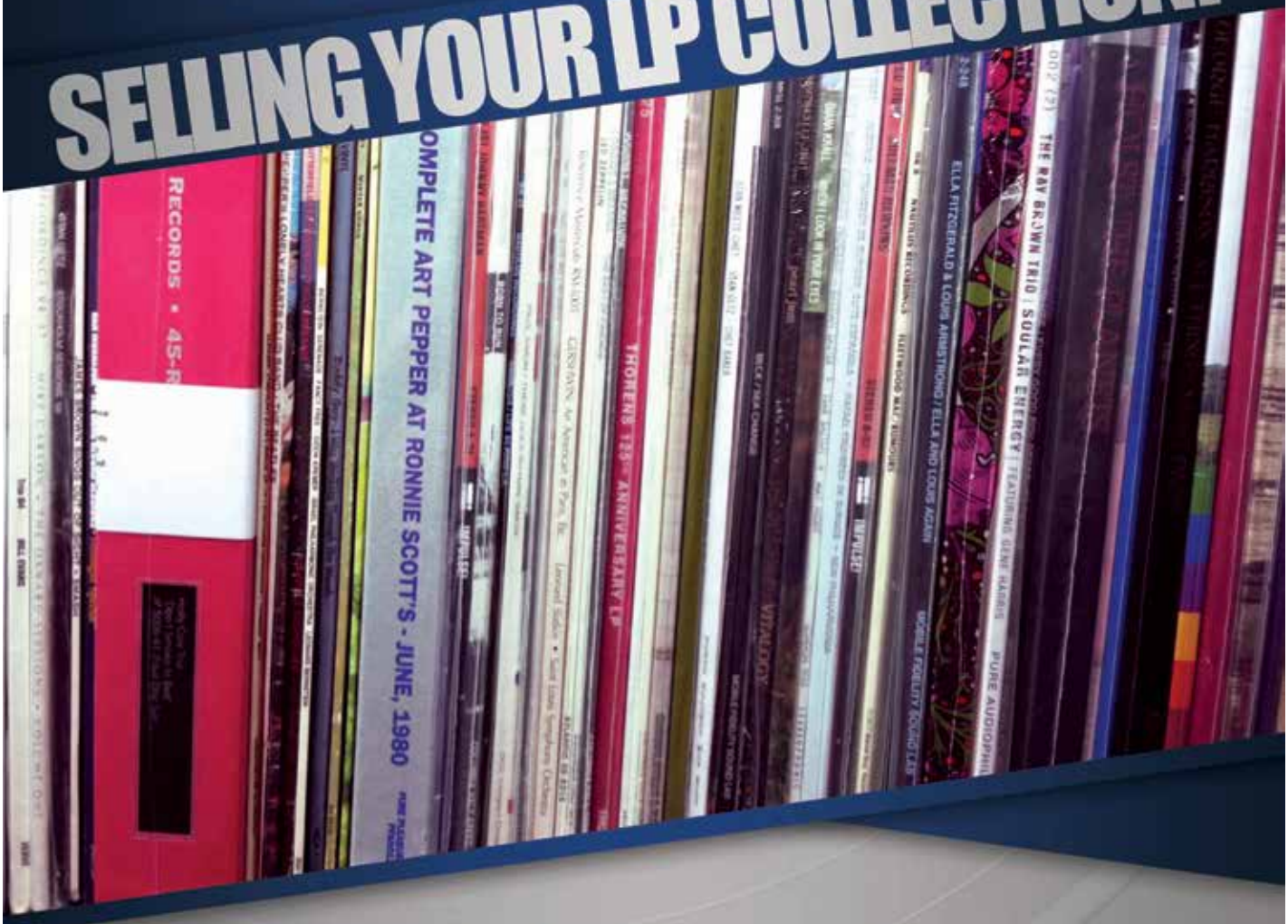
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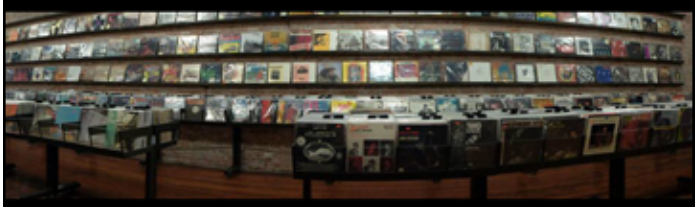
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Divine Revelation

The Oracle Turntable Upgrade

BY DAVID THOMSON

LAST NIGHT, I HEARD AN album that I've been listening to for years, for the very first time.

Sure, I thought that I had heard it, but there it was, in all its finery, with all its glorious detail, revealed for the first time. Hidden in the lacquer were layers of harmonics, detail, and soundstage that I never knew were always there.

You may ask, how did I extract this previously shrouded information? Easy, I upgraded my Oracle Delphi MKIII turntable to an MK VI–well just about an MK VI. The base, record clamp, and platter are still original. The suspension system was re-calibrated: The retrofitted new motor, the Torlon Thrust pad, the Micro Vibration Stabilizer system, and the drive belt are all brand spanking September, 2013.

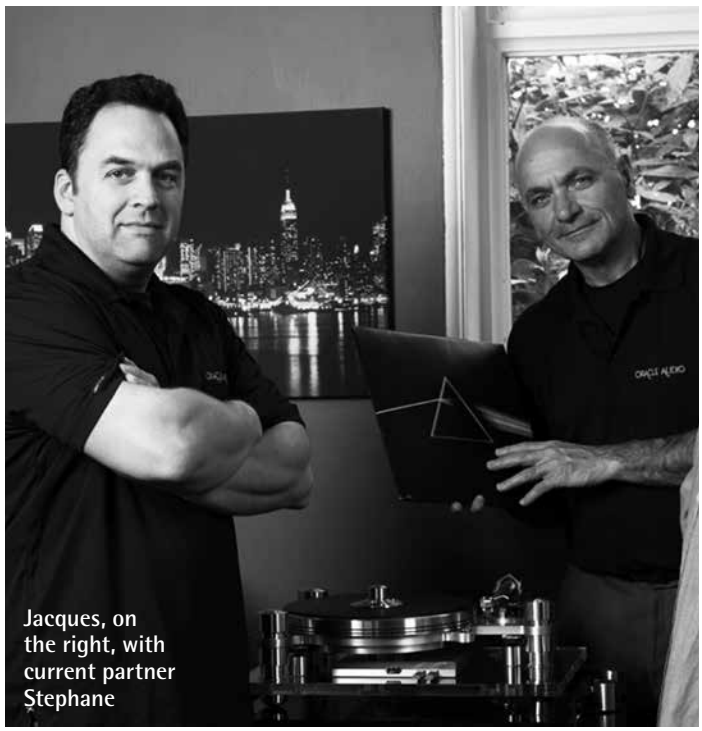
It could be argued that Oracle's founder, Marcel Riendeau, changed the way we listen to vinyl.

In the '60s, turntables evolved to the likes of Thorens' and Dual's simplistic designs of belt-driven platters, springing on a sub-chassis, housed in a wooden box.

In the 70s, the Linn Sondek, a similar, no-frills-on-the-outside layout offered refinements underneath that allowed Linn a stranglehold on the qualities of LP reproduction for many years.

By the late 70s Marcel, quietly lecturing philosophy at the University of Sherbrooke in Quebec, was also a fervent audiophile and musician.

To supplement his "habit," he dabbled in audio retailing and distribution and was searching for a high-end turntable. Nothing out there was good enough–neither sonically, nor aesthetically. So, necessity being the mother of invention, he embarked on developing a design of his own.



Jacques, on the right, with current partner Stephane

Little did he know, Oracle was about to blow the lid off the (L)industry.

Marcel agreed that the belt drive with a floating sub-chassis was clearly an improvement in the turntable's evolution.

Oracle's innovations include suspending, rather than compressing, three springs and enclosing them in a triangle of forged, polished aluminum towers that would–attention San Andreas fault readers–seemingly spin true through an 8.2 earthquake. (Hopefully, we will never test this assumption.)

This technique lowered the center of gravity while perfectly isolating the external energy from the platter.

And let's not forget the record clamp. This, now ubiquitous, breakthrough diffused the vibration, and resonance within the vinyl, by coupling it to Oracle's eight pound platter.

In hindsight, to quote Steve Harris recently in UK's Hi-Fi News, "Most important, I think, Oracle was really the first turntable manufacturer that was able to break that Linn supremacy, leaving the door open for the SOTAs, the VPls, the Goldmunds, and others."

Oracle's original introduction at the Consumer Electronics Show (CES) was an astounding success. Marcel returned with over 600 orders. Enter Jacques, his mechanically educated young brother, to engineer, and streamline, the production process.

Marcel is always open to augmentation and suggestions. For example, he adopted an idea of the late, great Brooks Berdan, the well-respected Oracle setup mechanic at GNP in Pasadena and later, at his own store, which is still operating in Monrovia, near Los Angeles. Brooks had fitted many early Oracles with his own U-shaped weight around the main bearing to simplify, accurately attaching different tone arms.

Coincidentally, that's where I succumbed to my Delphi MKIII. I loved its space-age design and, more importantly, how its sonic transparency blew away all the other turntable set-ups that I had previously owned.

Marcel, since retired, has left the reins of the company in the very capable hands of his–now, not quite so young–brother Jacques who acknowledges, "Oracle's design has withstood the test of time yet, technology doesn't stand still."

As an industry innovator, Oracle is still evolving and implementing improvements whether platter, motor, the new, unparalleled Micro Vibration Stabilizer system or, "Even our record clamp" adds Jacques.

Recently, at the well-respected Optimal Enchantment in Santa Monica, West Coast Oracle dealer Randy Cooley exposed me to the current, remarkable MK VI.

He saw me sit stationary, entranced, staring into the void. I couldn't help compare the resolution to my older Oracle.

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continued

Music enveloped me. Notes seem to penetrate to the bone. I experienced an undeniable advance in audio resolution and reproduction.

Then, he closed me. "The beauty of owning any older Oracle Delphi is that it is upgradable to within, as much as, 95% of the sonic values of the MK VI for only 45% of the cost of the MK VI." How could I resist?

So, off my Delphi went to Oracle and Jacques' tender care. My lowly budget only allowed an upgrade of about 80% of the MK VI improvements at, around, 32% of the outlay of the MK VI.

About 10 days later, SoCal's Oracle set-up maestro Jay Nakamura set about reassembling this puppy in my home. The analogy here is: Can I tune a 12 cylinder Jag? Not a chance; I call doctor Jay — he even makes house calls.

"And, once the Oracle is calibrated it's stable for years," he soothed.

Today, upgrade in place, I sit listening with the exact same cartridge, tone arm, and stereo components, to the same trusted test records: I'm in awe of the additional warmth and depth of Yarlung's award winning *Antonio Lysy at the Broad*; Stewart Copeland's intensely detailed *Rumblefish* soundtrack; Chet Baker's commanding *No Problem* on Steeplechase and, the stunning Dead Can Dance OMR release of *Into the Labyrinth*.

And, there's a new-to-me artist in town: Anne Bisson. Her Blue Mind album, masterfully recorded "*LIVE*" in 2008, has been adopted, not only by Oracle as a reference recording but, by many Hi-Fi outfits to demonstrate that vinyl still rules.

Anne's combined kicked-back ambience, surrendered with the tenderness of Diana Krall and nuance of Joni, have me mesmerized.

Track 2's opening kick drum, with such presence, confirmed that the upgrade had transported my turntable, and me, unto a new realm of vinyl reproduction.

Jay had observed my initial, eye-popping reaction. His response: "Oracle creates an uncanny audio experience. The isolation principles alone deliver an openness that other turntables just can't achieve."

Randy concurs. "The effect is holographic. It's as if the musicians and their instruments are suspended in space with their personalities, and air, surrounding them."

"Oracle creates an uncanny audio experience. The isolation principles alone deliver an openness that other turntables just can't achieve."

Call us crazy but, the satisfaction attained from the simple, uncolored sonic accuracy of that dampened kick drum resonating in the room as if the drummer is performing just for you, is the lubrication that keeps us loopy audio geeks constantly striving to improve our systems. It's also nearer the rendition the artists and engineers intended us to hear.

When you think about it, we've had decent recordings for about six decades. In technology years that's almost Neanderthal. The information on the vinyl doesn't change. And, we're still trawling a rock through a trough to retrieve it. It's the delivery device that evolves. Oracle's contribution is exemplary.

Hear for yourself. RCN

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Oscar Pettiford in Germany

BY ARMAND LEWIS

DURING THE SWING ERA, the bass was rarely prominent in either performance or recording. Used almost exclusively to "keep time" and to maintain the rhythmic foundation behind the front line instruments, the bass player would primarily support the soloists or the ensemble. Any solos a bassist might play were usually short perfunctory passages that merely displayed the time signature of the tune being played. With the advent of bebop in the early 1940s, this began to change; in large part due to one bassist who saw the potential of the bass as an instrument for improvisation.

Oscar Pettiford was born in 1922 on an Indian reservation in Okmulgee, Oklahoma. His mother was full Cherokee and his father was half Cherokee and half African-American. By the early 1930s, the family had moved to Minneapolis, where with eleven children, the senior Pettifords created a big band made up entirely of family members who toured successfully throughout the Midwestern United States.

Originally learning piano at age twelve, in his mid-teens young Oscar Pettiford took up the double bass because, as he later said, he didn't like the way the instrument was played, so he developed his own way of playing it.

In the early 1940s, Pettiford would work with Charlie Barnet's big band as well as co-lead with Dizzy Gillespie one of the first modern jazz / bebop bands. His last big band gig came in 1949, when he played bass in Woody Herman's band.

By the early 1950s, Pettiford had become the pre-eminent bass player on the New York recording scene. He can be heard on early albums by Miles Davis, Thelonious Monk, Bud Powell and Tal Farlow among others. Throughout the '50s, Pettiford would also record his own large bebop groups including an excellent album for fellow bassist Charles Mingus' Debut label.

In 1958, Pettiford went to Europe and settled in Copenhagen, where he quickly found work backing visiting American musicians while also leading and recording his own bands. A number of excellent albums resulted in this period as well as several radio broadcasts, which have just been discovered in German archives.

As part of their "Lost Tapes" series, JazzHaus/SWR Music has just released an album of radio broadcasts Pettiford made between late 1958 and mid-1959. *Oscar Pettiford – Lost Tapes Germany 1958/1959* (Jazzhaus 101719) features a mix of standards and original compositions by both Pettiford and members of his groups.

Opening with George Gershwin's "But Not for Me", Pettiford and trumpeter Dusko

continued

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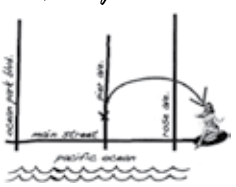

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continued

Goykovich perform a soft duet. Goykovich's sound echoes the early style of Miles Davis and the simple bass / trumpet interplay captures the haunting beauty of the tune as it was likely played in late nightclubs.

"A Smooth One" features a duet between Pettiford and German clarinetist Rolf Kuhn. At the time, clarinet was not thought of as an instrument for modern jazz. Yet Kuhn's playing is perfect; setting a literally mysterious tone that, here and on subsequent tracks, is crisp and precise, yet hauntingly emotional.

"The Nearness of You", "Yesterdays" and "All the Things You Are" highlight the tracks featuring tenor saxophonist Hans Koller. Once voted "the number one saxophonist in Germany", Koller's sound echoes that of Lester Young by way of Al Cohn – very smooth and bluesy.

The album closes with two live concert performances; including a solo rendition of "All the Things You Are" featuring Pettiford along with piano, guitar and drums playing rhythm behind the bass, which carries the melody.

The discovery of these tapes marks an important addition to Pettiford's recorded legacy as these sessions were all done within two years of his untimely death from a virus in 1960. Had he lived, chances are he would have continued working with the smaller group sizes he was developing at the time of these sessions. This album is not only of some of Pettiford's last recorded performances, but also an indication of what would likely have been his future musical direction. RCN

Armand Lewis buys and sells rare Jazz LPs. He can be reached at mrbluenote@peoplepc.com

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Pasadena, CA. Pasadena City College Flea Market and Record Swap. 1570 E Colorado Blvd. Pasadena. 8am-3pm. FREE admission. Parking $2

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Las Vegas, NV. Great American Record Shows. Hampton Inn Events Center 4975 Dean Martin Drive. 10am – 4:30pm. 602-625-3000.

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Seattle, WA. Lake City Record Show. Lake City Community Center. 12531 28th Ave N.E. FREE. 10am – 4pm. 206-850-1588.

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San Bernardino, CA. Viva Las Vinyl. 503 W 31st St. $3. 9am-3pm. 909-384-2981

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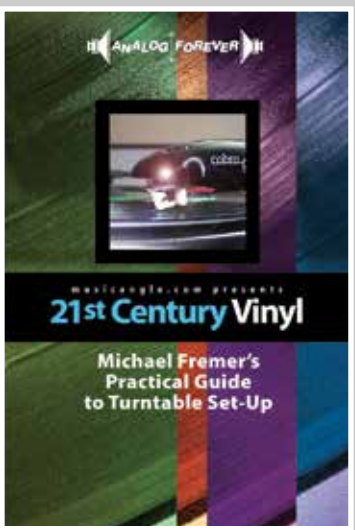

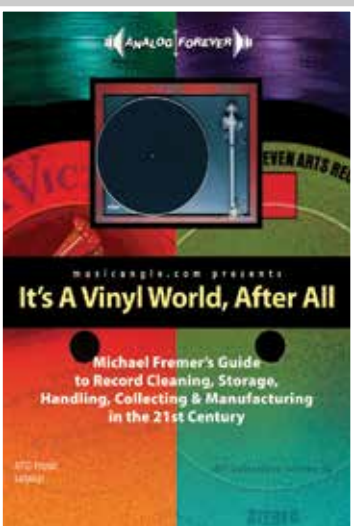

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